天海玲菜

阿川宗則

そりが合わない妹の出現を
きっかけに過去を語り始める。

乗入麻生に条件付きで
恋なごのキスを認められた弟。

Cupid Ⅱ
Volume.5
"Cherry Syndrome"

●COVER ILLUSTRATION / 志城 彩
●TITLE LOGO & COVER DESIGN / 有澤 善一(アイワンスタジオ)

YS
クビドの悪戯Ⅱ

さくらんぼシンドローム

Cherry Syndrome

5

北崎 拓
Taku Kitazaki Presents

小学館

Young Sunday Comics

さくらんぼシンドローム
Cherry Syndrome
クビドの悪戯Ⅱ
5
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北崎 拓
Taku Kitazaki
Young Sunday Comics

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Cupid Ⅱ
Volume.5
"Cherry Syndrome"

この時代、恋の神様クビド(Cupid)が悪戯心で選んだ男女に起こる恋の物語。
オムニバス第2弾「さくらんぼシンドローム」――
両親の虐待、麻生が、阿川たちとの小さな過ちのその先の物語。
妹が小さくなったことを知らない兄弟の妹の突然変誌!
知られたくない過去をバラされたりは、自己語り始める――
大きくなりたい兄弟たちのウラに、こんな想いがありました。
まだ小さくなる前、高校生・れなの切ない恋物語、完全収録!

今、一番おもしろい
YOUNG SUNDAY COMICS

さくらんぼシンドローム(クビクの悪戯Ⅱ・1)――北崎拓
クビドの悪戯 ●3.5・全2巻――北崎拓
なんでこ探偵事アイドル 全1巻・1巻――北崎拓／井上純弥
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北崎 拓
Taku Kitazaki

7月27日生まれ、兵庫県出身、A型。
代表作:たとえばこんなラブコメ(ノ)
(みたりにまずは)。
日本年代賞する恋愛漫画家。

Young Sunday Comics

さくらんぼシンドローム

「クピドの悪戯II」

Cherry Syndrome

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Cupid II

Volume.5

"Cherry Syndrome"

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「クピドの悪戯II」

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Cupid II Volume.5

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Young Sunday Comics

THE ARROWS THAT CUPID,
OF ROMAN LEGEND FAME
WOULD SHOOT AROUND AT
A WHIM HAD AN UNCANNY POWER
THAT LET HIM HAVE MEN AND
WOMEN'S HEARTS AT HIS BECK AND CALL.
ANY HUMAN BEING WHOSE
HEART HE PIERCED WITH A GOLDEN
ARROW WOULD AWAKEN TO LOVE,
AND THERE WAS NO PASSION
THAT WOULDN'T BE SQUELCHED
AFTER A SHOT FROM
HIS ARROWS OF LEAD.
NOWADAYS, SHOULD CUPID EVER
GET IN A MISCHIEVOUS MOOD...

Young Sunday Comics

PREVIOUSLY.
AGAWA MUNENORI COMES OUT AND TELLS HIS GIRLFRIEND
ASOU SAYAKO ABOUT AMAMI RENA, THE GIRL HE MUST KISS
LEST SHE REGRESS IN AGE. ASOU REFUSES TO ACKNOWLEDGE THIS SITUATION,
AND ONCE RENA AND HER ARE DONE ATTACKING ONE ANOTHER'S MOTIVATIONS,
SHE AGREES TO LET THEM KISS, ON THE CONDITION THAT IT MUST HAPPEN
"AT HER PLACE". BUT ALMOST IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER,
RENA'S YOUNGER SISTER DROPS BY FOR AN IMPROMPTU VISIT.
AS AGAWA AND ASOU DO THEIR ABSOLUTE BEST TO KEEP HER IN THE DARK,
RENA'S SISTER, IGNORANT THOUGH SHE IS OF HER OLDER SIBLING'S CONDITION,
STILL MANAGES TO GET HER OUT OF HIDING. UNABLE TO BEAR
THIS SITUATION ANY LONGER, RENA STARTS UNVEILING HER OWN
PAST FIRSTHAND...

さくらんぼシンドローム

クピドの悪戯II

Cherry Syndrome

5

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北崎拓
Taku Kitazaki Presents

JUST LIKE WE DID, ASOU-SAN AND I...

...THAT IS SOMETHING ADULTS DO.

PUTTING ON A MASK TO CONCEAL YOUR TRUE SELF FROM OTHERS...

第39話: ずっとこうだった!!

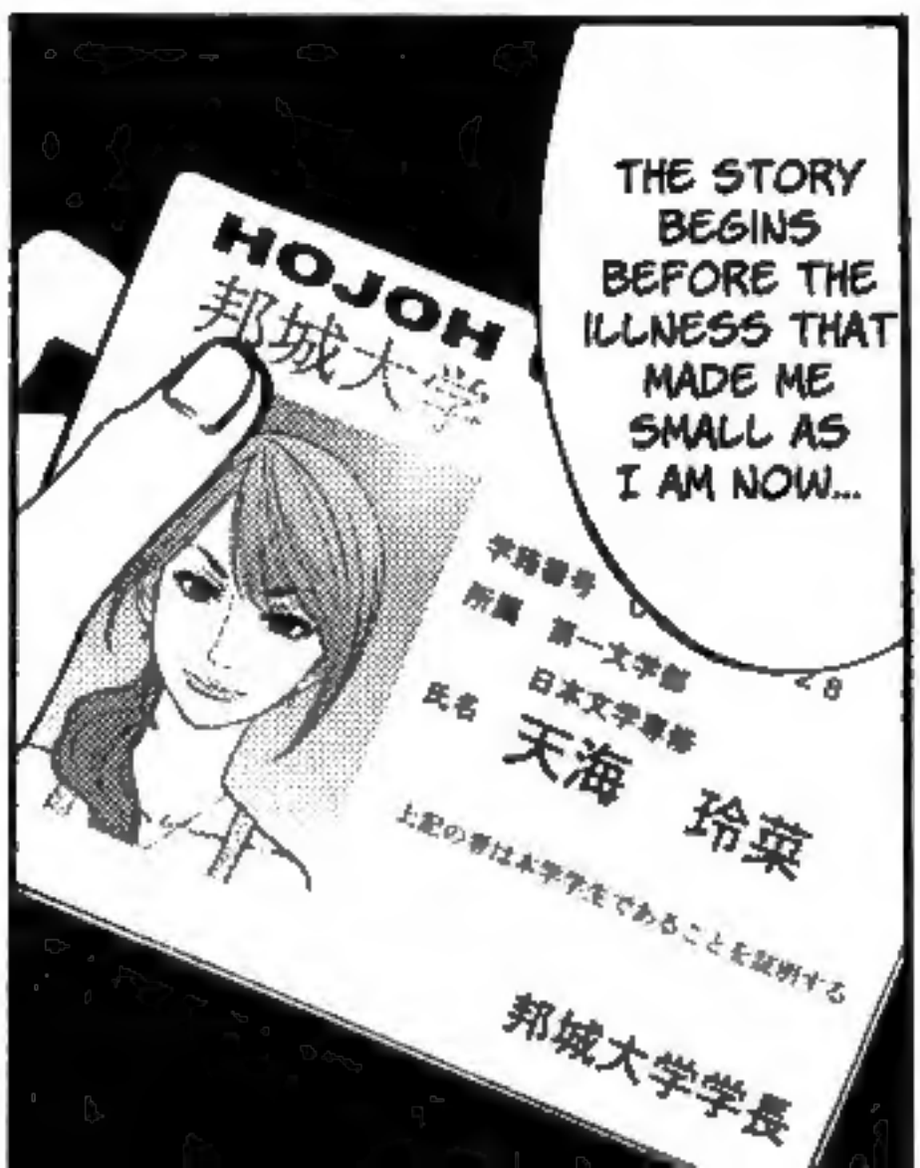
OF COURSE, IN RENA'S CASE ...

BUT... CONSIDERING HOW GOOD YOU'VE BEEN TO ME... ...I THINK IT'S WRONG NOT TO BE UP FRONT...

THERE ARE PLENTY OF THINGS I HAVEN'T TOLD YOU ...

WAS RENA WEARING YET ANOTHER MASK HERSELF..?

THE STORY BEGINS BEFORE THE ILLNESS THAT MADE ME SMALL AS I AM NOW...



SO IT'S NOT ALL THAT SURPRISING, BUT STILL...

...THE EXTERIOR IS THAT OF A CHILD, BUT SHE'S A GROWN-UP INSIDE.

THIS IS ABOUT THE TRUE ME.

WELL...

...EVEN EARLIER THAN THAT.

HOJO

邦城大学

UNI

学

学籍番号 0

所属 第一文学

日本文学

氏名 天海

上記の者は本学学生で

邦城

CHAPTER 39 -
IT'S ALWAYS BEEN THAT WAY!!

YOU RANKED AMONG THE 300 BEST NATIONWIDE AT THE MOCK EXAM?

AMAMI RENA, YOU ROCK !!

MIRE!

SHELVES: 918 JAPANESE LITERATURE, COMPLETE WORKS./913□917 JAPANESE ESSAYS.

WHO CARES ABOUT TOKYO ?!

WAY TO THROW AWAY YOUR CHANCE, MIRE!

EVEN HEARD SOME TEACHERS' TALK ABOUT RECOMMENDING YOU FOR HOJO UNIVERSITY IN TOKYO.

NO TOKYO !

YOU'RE REALLY NOT GOING?

TN:
MIRE IS A NICKNAME FOR AMAMI RENA.
IN JAPAN, UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE IS DECIDED BY A NATIONAL EXAM, PLUS ANY ENTRANCE EXAM YOUR UNIVERSITY OF CHOICE MIGHT HAVE.

日本の文学全集

THERE ARE GOOD UNIVERSITIES HERE TOO, AREN'T THERE?

AND PUBLIC, TOO.

4

I ZAPPED SOMEONE AGAIN...

UH-OH...

HIC

MY STARE LOOKS SO EVIL EVEN MY FRIENDS ARE PUT OFF WHEN THEY CATCH SIGHT OF IT, TO THIS DAY.

.....

FIRST, MY PARENTS WOULD NEVER ALLOW ME TO LIVE ON MY OWN.

AAAAH. I SEE.

SO MEDDLE-SOME. IT'S THEIR DAUGHTER'S LIFE, NOT THEIRS:

YOUR FATHER, ESPEC-IALLY!

5

I HAD ALWAYS BEEN SO SMALL, BUT BY THE TIME I HIT HIGH SCHOOL, I STARTED GETTING TALLER... BY EARLY SUMMER IN MY SENIOR YEAR I WAS OVER 170CM.

ｈ" ＡｙＹ

THE BELL.

LET'S GO! TAKE-MOTO'S NEXT!!

UH?

DID YOU GET EVEN TALLER?

MIRE ...

TH-THIS IS LAST YEAR'S SUMMER UNIFORM.

SO I THOUGHT I'D GET AWAY WITH NOT BUYING A NEW ONE. OOPS.

!

YOUR SKIRT LOOKS LIKE ITS GOTTEN TOO SHORT FOR YOU AGAIN.

6

IT'S YOU GUYS WHO'RE SHRINKING.

AS LONG AS THE WAIST SIZE STAYS THE SAME.

STILL, HERE'S HOPING KATOU-SENSEI DOESN'T ASK TOO MANY QUEST-IONS.

BUT THERE AREN'T MANY BIG-BREASTED MODELS OUT THERE.

I'M WONDER-ING WHY.

YEAH, SURE...

YOU COULD DO SOME TELE-VISION, WITH THOSE.

I WISH I HAD YOUR THIN LEGS, RENA.

.....

I-I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT...

I AGREE YOU'D BE REAL SUCCESSFUL WITH BOYS IF YOU TRIED TO BE MORE FASHION-ABLE.

.....

SPEAKING OF WHICH THE BOYS DO HAVE PICTURES OF HER. STOLEN SHOTS, I HEAR.

YOUR KID SISTER IS REALLY CUTE, MIRE.

BEING FASHIONABLE IS MORE TROUBLE THAN IT'S WORTH...

AND IT'S TOTALLY NOT MY THING.

AT LEAST THAT'S THE IMPRESSION I GET FROM MY SISTER.

BUT...

.....

GLANCE

..I KNEW I LOOKED GOOD FROM BEHIND... AND I WAS CONFIDENT ABOUT IT... IF ONLY A LITTLE...

.....

.....

B

MY EYES, THOUGH ...

THE HELL, MAN? THAT WAS CREEPY.

PLUS THE WHITE COVERED NEARLY ALL THE AVAILABLE SURFACE, WHICH MEANS MY PUPILS PROPER WERE COMPARATIVELY SMALL. MUCH LIKE THE EYES OF A CAT IN A BRIGHTLY LIT AREA.

...THEY WERE LARGE AND DOUBLE-LIDDED, BUT ALSO VERY SLANTED...

HEY.

WHENEVER I LOOKED UP FROM THAT POSITION, THE ANGLE WOULD GIVE MY EYES A SHARP, EVIL, LOOK, SANPAKU STYLE.

...AND I ENDED UP DEVELOPING A STOOPING HABIT.

TO TOP IT ALL OFF, I'D GROWN SKY HIGH IN NO TIME, AND I WAS SORT OF MISSING MY OLD FIELD OF VISION...

TN: LOOK UP "SANPAKU EYES" ON WIKI.

YOUR SISTER.

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL...

A PHENOMENON FURTHER AMPLIFIED BY MY GLASSES, MAKING AN ALREADY UNPLEASANT SITUATION ABOUT AS BAD AS IT COULD POSSIBLY BE.

...WITH BIGGER BLACKS THAN WHITES AND ALWAYS WATERY, LIKE THOSE OF A SMALL PUPPY.

MY SISTER HAD DROOPING EYES...

!!

...I'M WONDERING WHAT THEY USE THEM FOR..?

SO CUTE.

THE BOYS EVEN TRADE STOLEN PICTURES OF HER, DON'TCHA KNOW.

SHE'S GOT THEM FRIENDS BY THE TRUCKLOAD WHEREVER SHE GOES.

.....

GROSS.

AAAAH!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, WHAT?!

I'M HOME.

RENA.

WEL-COME BACK.

CRINGE

JUST DROP-PING BY FOR A MIN-UTE.

HIYA.

.....

NO KIDDING? SHE'S A GENIUS.

SHE WAS CLASSED AMONG THE TOP 300 NATIONWIDE AT HER EXAM.

WHICH ONE IS BETTER? WELL, I GUESS THAT'S OBVIOUS.

ESPECIALLY IN THE BRAINS DEPARTMENT. ♡

NO WAY! SERIOUSLY?

YEP.

THAT YOUR BIG SISTER, AYANA?

YOU DON'T LOOK ANYTHING ALIKE.

SFX: LAUGHTER.

BUT SHE CAN'T BE ALL THAT HAPPY, SEEING AS SHE NEVER MANAGED TO GET HERSELF A BOYFRIEND EVEN ONCE.

TELL ME ABOUT IT.

.....

WHA- WHAT THE! WHO ASKED THEM TO...

WAI...

FOR REAL, SHOUJI-KUN. CARE TO APPLY FOR THE POSITION?

NO BOY-FRIEND? FOR REAL?

SFX: CACKLE AND LAUGHTER.

MAYBE IT'S MEANT FOR A CURSE OR SOMETHING?

YEAH, THAT'S GOT TO BE IT

HEY, WHY IS SHE KEEPING HER BLACK HAIR SO LONG? DO GIRLS STILL DO THAT?

UUUUUH. NO, NOT FOR ME. FORGET ABOUT IT!

AYANA

I COULD HAVE TOLD DAD ON YOU DURING DINNER, BUT I KEPT QUIET.

BE GRATE-FUL.

WHAT ARE YOU TALK-ING ABOUT?

.....

HM?

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO BE FOUND OUT, YOU'D BETTER WASH HIS GLASS AND PUT IT BACK ON THE RACK BEFORE MOM RETURNS.

YOU HAD YOUR BOYFRIEND WITH YOU IN YOUR ROOM TODAY.

YEAH, RIGHT.

THAT WAS JUST A FRIEND.

PFAH!

YOU HEARD MOM. EAST HIGH IS FULL OF DELINQUENTS, SO BE CAREFUL...

HE DOES SEEM TO BE THE KIND OF GUY YOU'D FALL FOR.

THE ONE WITH THE BROWN DYE-JOB, RIGHT? SITTING NEAR THE EDGE OF YOUR BED.

I NEVER STOOD A CHANCE.

IT TOOK YOU ONLY ONE SECOND TO FIGURE OUT SO MUCH.

...GIGGLE

WOOOOOOW!

AREN'T YOU A FRUSTRATED ONE?

SNICKER

SO TYPICAL OF YOU, DEAR SISTER.

♡

WHAT? YOU'RE A GROWN UP, ACT LIKE IT!!

RENA JUST HIT ME FOR NO REAS- OOON!

AA AA AA HH !!

NOT FAIR.

YOUR SISTER WOULDN'T BE ANGRY IF YOU HADN'T DONE ANYTHING.

WHAAAAT!

I DIDN'T DO ANY- THING TO HER.

...AND THAT'S ALL SHE GETS?

SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO PAY FOR HUMILIATING ME...

ADEPT AT CURRYING FAVORS... AND CUNNING LIKE A FOX!!

MY SISTER'S ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THAT!!

.....

DON'T BE SILLY!

HEY, WHAT'S FOR DES- SERT?

AH, THAT. IT'S OVER, NOW.

DIDN'T YOU TELL ME TO AVOID PREPARING SWEETS NOT SO LONG AGO? SOMETHING ABOUT YOU BEING ON DIET...

...I WOULD HAVE THE CONGRAT-ULATIONS OF MY PARENTS, AMONG OTHERS.

IN ORDER TO MATCH THE APPEARANCES I WOULD DO MY BEST EFFORTS, AND AS A RESULT...

BUT FOR SOME REASON I WAS NEVER ALLOWED TO BEHAVE LIKE A CHILD, OR SO I FELT.

MAYBE IT WAS BECAUSE I LOOKED SO STERN, I WOULDN'T KNOW...

DOES SHE HAVE A BRAIN ?!

SO?!

...FIFTY-YYYY!

I GOT...

A LITTLE LAUGH, AND IT'S ALL OVER ..?

THAT'S IT?

YUP.

OH, WELL. TRY HARDER NEXT TIME.

THAT GIRL IS SUCH A HANDFUL...

PHEW

YOUR SISTER'S NEVER BROUGHT HOME THAT KIND OF SCORE.

HOW CAN YOU LAUGH SO CAS-UALLY!

...THAT'S HOW IT'S ALWAYS BEEN!!

AS FAR AS I CAN REMEMBER

AWE-SOME! MY SISTER IS A GENIUS!

GIGGLE

UUUH. YES, IT'S TRUE.

CRUNCH CRUNCH

YEAH.

RIGHT, BUT YOU SEE.

WHO DOES SHE THINK SHE IS, THE IDIOT!!

WHO DOES SHE THINK SHE IS?!!

WHISPERS

YES, SHOUJI-KUN. I LOVE YOU TOO.

UH-HUH.

UH-HUH ...

YES I DO ...

.....

CACKLE

SHE KNOWS MOM WILL BE FURIOUS BY THE END OF THE MONTH, DOES SHE NOT?

SHE'S SPENDING FOREVER ON THE PHONE AGAIN!!

I KNEW A THING OR TWO ABOUT IT FROM THE MANGA I'VE READ, BUT STILL...

TH-AT'S WHAT THEY DO, THEN. ALL OF THEM..?

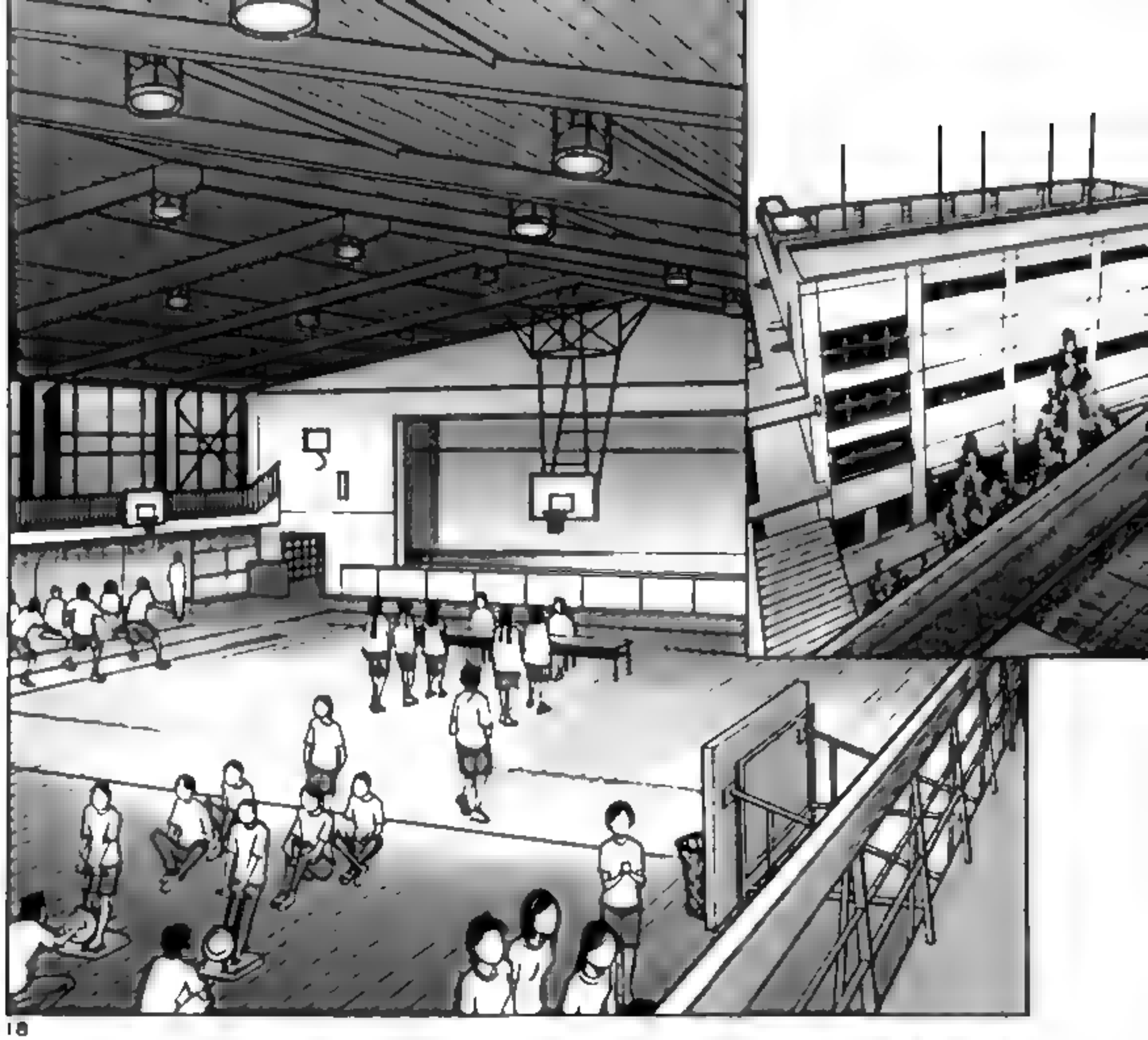
THE HECK ...

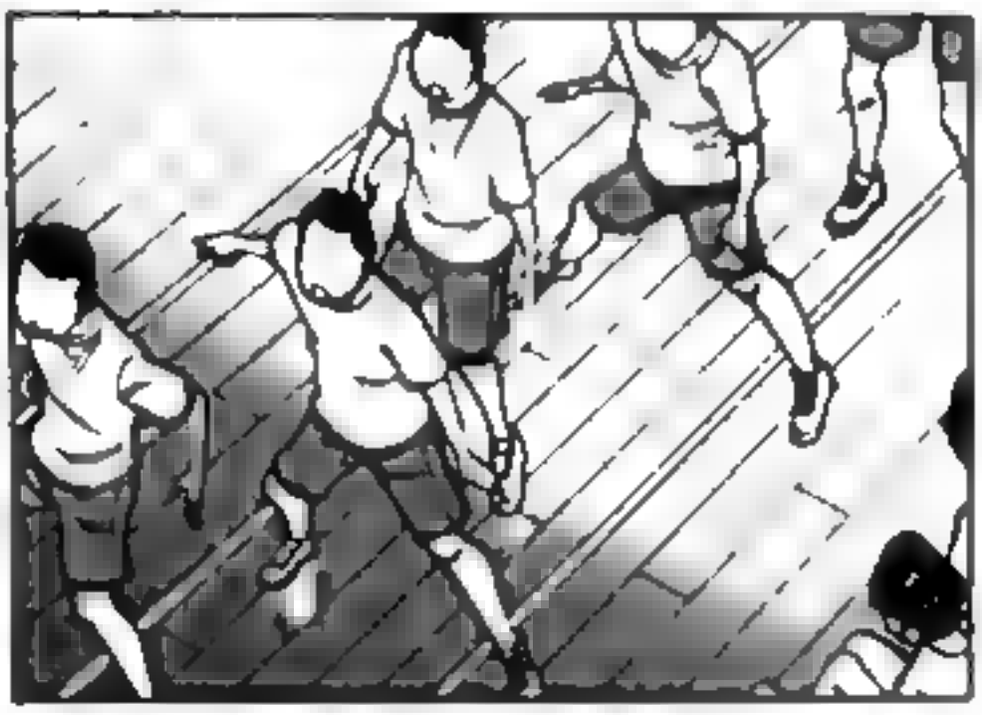
.....

.....

WHATEVER THE BOYS DO WITH MY SISTER'S PICTURES IN THIS SITUATION, I WANNA HEAR IT FROM THEM!!

18





YOU GOT BETTER THINGS TO DO THAN OGLING!

PERVERTS!

WHAT'RE YOU LOOKING AT?

HUUH

SHOE!

NEXT UP, A BOY!

IGNORE THE GIRLS AND KEEP GOING.

SHOE-KUN...

CHECK IT OUT.

PFT!

20

SFX: LAUGHTER

CHAPTER 40 -
TALL WOMEN ARE COOL

AHAHA

GIGGLE

QUITE AN INTERESTING PAIR, THEY MAKE!

THE TALLEST GIRL IN OUR GRADE.

AND THE SHORTEST GUY...

2

DON'T LET HER BEAT YOU!

THIS...

IT'S EMBARRASSING...

JUST JUMP AND BE DONE WITH IT, YOU TWO.

YOU'RE THE MAN, PAL.

AWE-SOME

WOOOW

82 cm

HE SHUT EVERYONE UP JUST WITH HIS SKILL, KEEPING HIS COOL ALL THE WAY...

TERRIFIC...

UH, SURE!

YOU KNOW, YOU CAN USE THE OTHER ONE...

80cm

CAN'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER.

YOU'RE THE FUNNY ONES FOR JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS BASED ON LOOKS ALONE.

BEING TALLER IS NO GUARANTEE THAT YOU'LL DEVELOP GREATER PHYSICAL CAPABILITY...

32 cm !!

OH GOD, THE SHAME ...

SFX: LAUGHTER

NO NEED TO TIDY UP. THE NEXT CLASS WILL BE USING THE MATERIAL AS WELL.

BUT I BARELY BOUGHT THOSE SHOES.

I CAN'T PUT IT ON.

UH?

SH-SHOE-KUN..!

スッ

AH!

...UH?

UH-HUM ...

WELL ...

THOSE SHOES YOU'RE WEAR-ING...

MUUUUUUUUUH-

I THINK...

THERE IS A GOOD CHAN-CE_

THAT THEY ARE ACT-UALLY MINE...

SNEAKER: AMAMI.

SORRY 'BOUT THAT. MINE ARE BRAND NEW TOO, SO I MISTOOK 'EM.

U

SHE'S GOT SOME BIG-ASS FEET ON HER, SHE DOES!

UM WELL NO. I MEAN, UH...

PPPFT!

SMALL WONDER THEY FELT SO DAMN LOOSE.

I'VE BEEN WONDERING WHY MY SHOES HAD BEEN REPLACED WITH BABY-SIZED ONES!

SAME HERE.

BABY-SIZED!!!

BABY-SIZED!

SIGN: LIBRARY.

AA AA AA AA AR GH !!

CLEARLY HE DIDN'T MEAN TO RUB ME THE WRONG WAY!

HE'S NOT THAT KIND OF GUY AT ALL!!

OF ALL THE UN-PLEASANT THINGS I COULD HAVE SAID, I HAD TO CHOSE THE ONE MOST LIKELY TO HURT HIM..!!

THAT SAID, IT'S KINDA LAME TO USE MY PHYSICAL HEIGHT AS A MEASURE OF MY SPIRITUAL WORTH...

……

I CAN BE SO INCONSID-ERATE!!

ONE LITTLE JAB AT MY LOW SELF-ESTEEM AND I WENT ALL SARCASTIC ON HIM!!

SO TALL YET SO SMALL-MINDED!!

YOU REALLY CAN'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER!!

STUDY-ING, MAYBE ?

SHOE-KUN IN THE LIBRARY. IT'S NOT OFTEN...

UH.

...AND SHE'D BE FORGIVEN JUST LIKE THAT. YEAH, I BET.

IN THE SAME POSITION, AYANA WOULD PROBABLY MAKE HIM SMILE WITH THOSE TRADEMARK PUPPY EYES OF HERS...

BUT I'M AFRAID HE WON'T WANT TO FORGIVE ME...

I WISH I COULD.

GUESS I SHOULD APOLOGIZE FOR EARLIER.

YE-YES ?!

...SAN.

AMAMI...

...CAN YOU HELP ME OUT WITH THIS?

SORRY...

THAN-KS.

A... ALL RIGHT.

STU-DIES ..?

UH?

DUH?

RE-MEMBER NEWTON'S THIRD LAW?

SEE THE EQUA-TION HERE...

THE ANGLE HERE BECOMES THE SAME...

...I EVER GET TO FACE A BOY UP CLOSE LIKE THIS.

TH-THIS IS THE FIRST TIME...

ドッ ドッ ドッ

ドキ ドキ ドキ

DI... DID YOU GET IT?

ドキ***

G... GOOD.

LEMME GIVE YOU A TIP, THOUGH...

YOU MAKE A GREAT TEACHER.

YOU SURE DIDN'T STEAL YOUR RANK IN THE NATIONAL TOP 300!

BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO BEND FORWARD TO TALK TO ME.

YOU'RE PROBABLY TRYING TO BE CONSIDERATE ABOUT MY LITTLE HEIGHT PROBLEM.

THE MORE IT ACT-UALLY HURTS. SURPRI-SINGLY, EH.

I KNOW I AIN'T NO GIANT, BUT I CAN'T DO NOTHING ABOUT IT. SO THE MORE FUSS PEOPLE MAKE OF IT, TRYING TO BE CONSIDERATE AND ALL...

UH?

SOLICITUDE... BUT I DIDN'T MEAN TO...

HE... MIS-TOOK IT FOR SOL-ICIT-UDE...

I... I WAS JUST TRYING TO CONVEY MY SATISFACTION AT HIS PRO-GRESS!...

...A BAD HABIT... OF MINE ...

THAT IS IT...

IT'S... JUST ...

IF... IF I'M ALWAYS BENT OVER...

UUUUUUH ...

AH...

THINGS COULD NOT GET ANY WOR-SE!

NOW I'VE GOT TEARS WELLING UP IN MY EYES!

COME ON, I NEVER LOOK QUITE AS TERRIBLE AS WHEN I'M CRYING!

EXCUSE ME!!

MY BAD!

I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT IT, AND JUST PULLED THE CONSIDERATION THING OUT OF MY ASS.

THIS IS THE SORT OF MISTAKE I SHOULDN'T BE MAKING!

NAH! CAN'T HAVE THAT SORT OF THING!

.....

AND I CAN'T HAVE THAT!

IT JUST REEKS OF THAT INFERIORITY COMPLEX I GOT ABOUT MY HEIGHT.

JUST AS I THOUGHT... HE'S AMAZING.

I REALLY APOLO-GIZE FOR THIS!

PLEASE FORGIVE ME!!

SHOE-KUN...

...IS SO COOL...

ACKNOW-LEDGING HIS OWN COMPLEX SO OPENLY IN FRONT OF SOME-ONE.

A-APO-LOGIES!!

ペコリ

SA-SAME HERE.

DURING THE SPORTS EVALUATION...

F-FOR EARL-IER.

HUH?

BUT IT STRUCK THE "HEIGHT COMPLEX" CHORD IN ME, AND I JUST LOST IT. IT WAS IRRATIONAL.

ACTUALLY, I COULD TELL YOU DIDN'T MEAN IT THAT WAY...

SO I THOUGHT YOU WERE MAKING FUN OF ME BECAUSE OF MY BIG SHOES.

SEE, I'M TOO TALL AND I HATE THAT ABOUT MYSELF...

TH-THINK NOTHING OF IT. I SHOULD BE THE ONE MAKING EXCUSES.

I-I'M AWFULLY, TERRIBLY SORRY ABOUT THAT ONE.

BEING TALL AIN'T SOMETHING YOU SHOULD BE COMPLEXING ABOUT, AMAMI.

UH?

GOTTA SAY, THOUGH. I DON'T GET IT.

HEY, WHAT HAPPENED TO HONOR-IFICS?

EH?

TN: "YOBISUTE" (呼び捨て), OR "DROPPING THE HONORIFICS" ISN'T DONE LIGHTLY IN JAPAN. IT'S USUALLY A SIGN OF CLOSE FRIENDSHIP, AND MAY COME OFF AS UN-SPEAKABLY RUDE IF DONE ARBITRARILY.

TALL GIRLS ARE THE SHIT

I LIKE TALL

TALL WOMEN ARE GODDESS

ME TOO.

AY AAAAAA!!

...NOW I'M FEELING ALL FUZZY INSIDE!!

WUUUUU-UUUUT? AAAH, I SEEEEE.

YES. UH-HUH. ♡

.....

MOMMA SAID TO SORT OUT YOUR RECYCL-ABLES.

NO WAA-AAA-AY!

WEAVE-NO!

WHAT'S THE POINT OF ALL THAT COQUETTISH WRIGGLING FOR SOMEONE WHO CAN'T SEE ANY OF IT...?

HERE. PUT THESE AWAY.

AW MAAAN! HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL HER TO TIE THESE THINGS UP PROPERLY...

TALL GIRLS ARE THE SHIT.

I'VE EVER MET TO BEDOM LIKE A SUPER-MODEL.

HAS REMAINED, THERE, THOROUGHLY, UNTOUCHED.

AS A RESULT MY POCKET MONEY AND WHATEVER CASH I RECEIVED AS A GIFT EVERY NEW YEAR

MY FAVORITE PLAYGROUNDS WERE THE LIBRARY AND THE BOOKSHOP

EVER SINCE I WAS A KID, READING HAS BEEN MY ONLY SOURCE OF ENTERTAINMENT

SHOE-KUN...

...I EVER BUY THIS MUCH ON MY OWN...

IT... IT'S GOT TO BE THE FIRST TIME...

MAYBE SHOE-KUN WILL FALL IN LOVE WITH ME?!

IF I CAN MANAGE TO LOOK ATTRACTIVE...

CHAPTER 41 -
IT ACTUALLY WORKED!

第41話：やれるじゃん！

UH.

I'VE BEEN RUNNING INTO SHOE-KUN A LOT THESE DAYS, WHENEVER I WENT TO THE LIBRARY.

カタ

2

CARE TO LEND A HAND? 'PRECIATE IT...

HERE.

THE TWO OF US HAVE BEEN SPENDING INCREASINGLY MORE TIME CHATTING TOGETHER.

YEAH?

SHOE-KUN, YOU'VE BEEN DOING A LOT OF STUDYING, LATELY.

...WHERE YOU'LL GO TO COL-LEGE?

DO YOU KNOW ...

I AIN'T GONNA GET NO UNIVERSITY RECOM-MENDATION LIKE YOU, GIRL. SO I'M NOT EXACTLY SPOILED FOR CHOICE.

WELL, I'VE BEEN SPENDING THE LAST THREE YEARS DOING ONLY THE STUFF I FANCIED. ATHLETICS, Y'KNOW.

NOW I SEE. MAKES SENSE.

AH, OKAY.

THANX.

I'M LEAVING FOR TOKYO

I WANT TO ATTEND COLLEGE THERE.

AND I MEAN REAL STUDIES!

I WISH TO UNDERTAKE A LITERARY COURSE...

.....

AND I DIDN'T THINK THINGS OVER TOO MUCH BEYOND THIS...

I-I SAID THAT BECAUSE I WAS AFRAID OF LIVING ON MY OWN, AND ALL...

YOU SAID A LOCAL UNIVERSITY WOULD DO JUST AS WELL...

B-BUT WHEN YOUR TEACHER SUGGESTED YOU GO TO TOKYO LAST YEAR...

I TRIED MY ABSOLUTE BEST TO CONVEY MY INTENT TO STUDY IN TOKYO. I DIDN'T EXPECT MY IDIOT OF A SISTER TO UNDERSTAND ANYTHING I SAID OF COURSE, BUT MY PARENTS WERE EQUALLY DROWNED UNDER THE BARRAGE OF CRYPTIC EXPLANATIONS.

A COMPARISON BETWEEN ENGLISH AND JAPANESE CHILDREN'S LITERATURE, BASED ON ALICE IN WONDERLAND AND NIGHT ON THE GALACTIC RAILROAD...

I'VE READ THAT BOOK BY PROFESSOR AMAMOTO, FROM THE HOJO UNIVERSITY: "THE YOUNG GIRL'S ADVENTURE AND THE BOY'S JOURNEY".

GETTING IN THE WAY OF YOUR STUDIES WOULD HAVE NEVER OCCURRED TO ME, YOU KNOW.

.....

TN: NIGHT ON THE GALACTIC RAILROAD, TRANSLATED FROM THE JAPANESE (GINGA TETSUDOU NO YORU) IS A FAIRY TALE AUTHORED BY POET MIYAZAWA KENJI (1896-1933), AND CONSIDERED AS HIS GREATEST WORK. IT'S ABOUT A BOY CALLED GIOVANNI WHO TRAVELS THE MILKY WAY WITH HIS FRIEND CAMPANELLA

THAT WAS LIKE...

...A SLAP IN THE FACE. I MEAN THAT IN A GOOD WAY, MIND YOU...

GOTTA SAY, THOUGH. SEEING SOMEONE LIKE YOU WHO NEVER VOICES HER OWN OPINION ASSERTING HERSELF SO FIERCELY?

.....

WHAT'S THAT S'POSED TO MEAN?

POUT

AYANA WOULD BE ANOTHER STORY, BUT YOU ARE SERIOUS ENOUGH FOR ME TO ALLOW YOU TO LIVE ON YOUR OWN... RIGHT?

I'M SORRY.

MOM. DAD.

.....

I MEAN, MAN, THAT WAS AWESOME.

AT THE EIGHTH SECTION, THERE WAS THAT FRESHMAN CALLED MURAI, AND HE GOT LIKE 10 PEOPLE EATING HIS FRICKIN' DUST ONE BY ONE...

HAVE YOU SEEN THE IZU RELAY RACE THIS YEAR?

I WANNA GET INTO A UNIVERSITY IN SOUTH-EAST TOKYO.

BUT ...

MY MIND RACING WITH A MILLION OF UNSPEAKABLE THOUGHTS.

I WAS SITTING THERE, STARING IN AWE AT AN UNUSUALLY TALKATIVE SHOE-KUN'S PROFILE.

...THAT'D BE LIKE, AWESOME ALRIGHT.

IF I COULD ACTUALLY MANAGE THAT TIMING AND BE A RUNNER IN THAT UNIVERSITY FOR A WHOLE FOUR YEARS...

BY THE TIME I CAN PARTICIPATE MURAI-SAN WILL STILL BE IN THIRD YEAR, SO I'LL GET TO RUN WITH HIM

SAY I SPEND THE NEXT FEW YEARS TRAINING UNDER COACH HAMADA AND MAKING PROGRESS.

I'LL HAVE TO BECOME A WHOLE LOT PRETTIER THEN THAN I AM RIGHT NOW.

ALBEIT IN A DIFFERENT UNIVERSITY.

I'LL GET TO LIVE IN TOKYO, ALONG WITH HIM.

.....

ウェディングベルの前の

同棲生活

AND WHEN I AM...

AA AA AA AA AH !!

I'M A SICK GIRL...

A TOTAL PERVERT ...

...THAT MEANS COMPARING AND STUDYING SEVERAL FASHION MAGAZINES IN ORDER TO FIGURE OUT AND CLASSIFY WHAT'S "TRENDY", SO TO SPEAK.

APPLIED TO FASHION...

MY METHOD WHEN LEARNING SOMETHING FROM SCRATCH IS ALWAYS THE SAME.

STUDYING HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY FORTE.

MY BIG BREASTS SHOULD DEFINITELY NOT BE A DISADVANTAGE.

...TO SORT OUT WHICH IS WHICH.

...MAKE A CLEARHEADED ASSESSMENT OF MY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES...

FROM THERE...

GOD CAN BE SO UNFAIR.

THE PROBLEM LIES WITH THOSE STERN-LOOKING EYES OF MINE...

NIJIHARA YUMI IS OVER 170CM TALL...

...SO THAT SHOULDN'T BE A WEAKNESS EITHER.

WHICH MEANS EVERYONE IS FOND OF HER NO MATTER WHAT OUT-RAGEOUS NONSENSE SHE SPOUTS. (WHICH DIDN'T HELP WITH HER SELF-ISHNESS AT ALL IF YOU ASK ME.)

MY HEAD-STRONG, MEAN LITTLE SISTER WAS BORN WITH PUPPY EYES...

...FINE-TUNING MY DEMEANOR IN ACCORDANCE WITH MY LOOK SHOULD TAKE CARE OF THE PROBLEM.

SO...

...IS AT ODDS WITH MY UNASSERTIVE PERSONALITY.

THE ONLY ISSUE IS THAT MY INTIMIDATING STARE...

REV-ERSE THINK-ING TIME.

...SOMEWHERE FAR AWAY FROM HOME. WALK ABOUT TOWN FOR A BIT.

I'LL PICK A FREE DAY...

...I WON'T SETTLE DOWN FOR "CUTE", I'M GUNNING FOR "DROP DEAD GORGEOUS".

AS FOR MY MAKEUP AND CLOTHING STYLE...

バタン

コツ コツ

STRAIGHTEN UP MY BACK!

LOOK STRAIGHT AHEAD!

MY HEIGHT IS NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF!

AND RUN AN EXPERIMENT, SOMEPLACE WHERE PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ME.

CHANGE CLOTHES, PUT ON SOME MAKEUP.

カツ

コツ

WHOA!

AND WALK AROUND LIKE THE KNOCKOUT I AM

BE CONFIDENT...

BUT...

BUT GALS WHO ARE CONFIDENT ABOUT THEIR HAIR AND WHATNOT AIN'T EXACTLY HARD TO FIND.

WE'VE BEEN FOOLED LIKE THAT A TRUCKLOAD OF TIMES ALREADY...

A MODEL AROUND HERE?

SHE'S TALL ALRIGHT. SOME LONG LEGS SHE'S GOT ON HER! SHE MUST BE SOME KIND OF TOP-MODEL?

WITH SILKY BLACK HAIR LIKE THAT SHE'D BE AT HOME IN A SHAMPOO COM-MERCIAL. ♡

AND CHECK OUT THE SHIT SHE'S WEARING. NONE OF IT LOOKS CHEAP!

RIGHT ON!

...IT DON'T MATTER IF IT'S A TRAP. WE'VE GOT TO CHECK IT OUT!

11

HEY, WHY'D I NEED TO BE SO FORMAL?

E-EXCUSE ME MISS, BUT WOULD YOU HAPPEN TO BE A MODEL...

...OR SOME SUCH THING..?!

SHE'S LIKE-LIKE FLAWLESS?!

WHOA...

AH...

HEH

AAAUGH

DID SHE JUST SCOFF AT ME?

GOOD LORD, WHAT STRESS !!

D' AA AA AA AH !!

I DID IT!!

IT ACT-UALLY WORK-ED!

I DID IT...

HEY_

HAHA...

KEEPS IT SIMPLE

...AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL ALIKE, I KEPT THE RESULTS OF MY EFFORTS ENTIRELY TO MYSELF.

HOW-EVER ...

BUT HAS TAKEN TO STAND UP STRAI-GHT

...IT WOULD HAVE PUT MY CHANCES TO LIVE ALONE IN TOKYO IN JEOPARDY.

FOR HAD ANYONE SO MUCH AS SUSPECTED MY IMMORAL PLAN...

DON'T SEE MUCH OF A CHANGE BESIDES THAT, THOUGH. STILL NO BOYFRIEND IN SIGHT.

YA THINK?

YEAH. I'VE NOT-ICED THAT TOO.

HEY, YOUR SISTER'S GOTTEN A TAD PRETTIER OF LATE, HASN'T SHE?

.....

GO FOR IT!

GO!

日本史

BOOK: HISTORY OF JAPAN.

GHAAA!

ポテー

WOOHOOO!

GO!

GO!

17

I MEAN, BRINGING BEETLES TO THE CLASSROOM? REALLY?

AREN'T YOU GUYS A BIT OLD TO ACT SO IMMAT-URE?

YOU PERV-ERT!!

WHAT A DISGU-STING THING TO SAY!

HM? US? DISGUSTING? NEVER!

THAT CURVED HORN THING RIGHT HERE IS A SYMBOL OF MAN-HOOD!

YOU CHICKS WOULDN'T UNDER-STAND!!

SHAD-DAP.

.....

NEXT TIME I'LL GET MY REVENGE.

.....

300 BU-CKS.

WHAT'CHU LOOKING AT?

N-NAH, NOTHING...

PASS THE ¥300 !!

AGH!

YAAAY! I WIN!!

UH?

.....

YOU'RE NOT FROM ANY COLLEGE IN THE VICINITY, ARE YOU?

WHAT SCH-OOL ARE YOU FROM?

HEY, MISS! YOU, WITH THE DARK HAIR. A MOMENT OF YOUR TIME.

第42話：伝えておくんだった。

THE LOCAL GIRLS CAN'T HOPE TO TOUCH THAT ANYTIME SOON...

WHAT WITH YOU LOOKING GOOD WITH THAT MERHES BAG DESPITE YOUR YOUNG AGE...

AHAHA. OKAY, I CAN GO HIDE MY-SELF.

LIKE YOU'VE MEMORIZED THE FACES OF EVERY COLLEGE STUDENT IN THE VICINITY, EH?

YES. WE'RE BASED IN TOKYO. I TAKE CARE OF IBUKI MIKI AND ZACKY, AMONG OTHERS...

ROMEO PROD-UCT-IONS?

SEE, I'M IN THE BUSINESS MYSELF.

IS THAT IT?

AH! PERHAPS YOU WORK FOR TV, OR SOME MAGAZINE?

CHAPTER 42 - I SHOULD'VE TOLD HIM

...BUT I'M NOT INTERESTED.

SORRY, SIR...

第42話：伝えておくんだった。

OW!!

GOTTA GET USED TO PUTTING ON THOSE LENSES ASAP...

OOW-WWW.

...BUT I'LL BE GOING FOR THE SAME FASHION-ABLE LOOK AS NIJI-CHAN.

IT'S A BIT OF A PITY ...

TO THINK I GREW THAT JET BLACK HAIR OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR A GIRL IN A NOVEL I LOVED...

NOT NOW, IT'D BE A DEAD GIVEAWAY. IT'LL WAIT TILL I LIVE ON MY OWN.

I'M GONNA DO SOMETHING ABOUT MY HAIR, TOO.

...WILL BE COMMENTING ON HOW PRETTY I AM

EV-ERY-ONE ...

EVERY-ONE...

WHAT ARE YOU GRINNING INTO THAT MIRROR FOR EXACTLY?

I THOUGHT YOU HAD AN EXAM TO PREPARE.

UH!

YES?

RENA?

YE-YEAH. WENT IN TOWN TO BUY SOME BOOKS...

HAVE YOU BEEN SOMEWHERE TODAY?

I-I GOT RECOMMENDED FOR THAT EXAM. I'LL BE FINE...

YOU'RE INTERESTED IN LUXURY BRANDS AND THE LIKE, NOW? WHAT'S THE DEAL?

Y-YES. I BOUGHT IT WITH MY SAVINGS.

...IT'S A MERMES...

THAT BAG...

...THAT SORT OF THING DOESN'T SUIT YOU AT ALL, IF YOU ASK ME.

CALI-CAUSE LET'S BE HONEST...

BUT CUTE AS YOU ARE, I'M SURE ANYTHING WOULD SUIT *YOU*.

YOU'RE PROB-ABLY RIGHT.

WHAT WITH YOU LOOKING GOOD WITH THAT HERMES BAG DESPITE YOUR YOUNG AGE...

REALLY ?

YOU'VE BEEN ACTING STRANGE LATELY, HAVEN'T YOU?

YOU BET-CHA!

I MEAN, "GOT MYSELF A FLING"? HOW VULGAR CAN YOU GET?!!

DO-DON'T BE SILLY...

GOT YOUR-SELF A FLING OR WHAT?

SILLY GIRL.

DON'T GET SO WORKED UP.

MY SISTER...

WHICH WAS MY ONE AND ONLY MEANS OF GARNERING RECOGNITION

I WAS GOOD AT STUDYING

COUPLED WITH HER ENDEARING FEATURES, IT MEANT THAT SHE WAS ALWAYS SURROUNDED WITH ADMIRERS

SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN CAREFREE AND CAREFREE, AS ONE MIGHT EXPECT FROM A FAMILY'S YOUNGEST CHILD

THE WAY I'D TILT MY HEAD DOWN AND LOOK UP, CONJURING THAT POWERFULLY BAD STARE IN THE PROCESS

I CAN ACCEPT IT

NOW THAT I AM WISER SOME MEASURE OF THAT FEELINGS [illegible]

WAS NO DOUBT MY WAY OF UNCONSCIOUSLY EVALUATING MY SISTER'S "CUTENESS" SCALE

...BEING A GOOD STUDENT CAN GET YOU

...FEELS MUCH BETTER THAN WHATEVER PRAISE...

...AND BE LOVED IN RETURN...

IF YOU ASK ME, THE ABILITY TO LOVE OTHERS...

I'M CHANGING!!

BEING IN LOVE WITH SHOE-KUN. NOW I'D LIKE THAT...

...I CAN START EVERYTHING ANEW.

ONCE I GET IN TOKYO, WHERE NOBODY KNOWS THE OLD "ME"

NEVER KNOW
YOU WERE
SAD NOT!!

AH... OKAY

HOJOH UNIVERSITY

.....

.....

QUITE THE HARD WORKER, YOU MAKE.

...QUI...

.....

SO THAT AIR OF EXPER-IENCED SEDUC-TRESS YOU HAD STARTED WITH YOUR DEBUT IN COLLEGE, RIGHT THEN.?

STILL, THERE'S THAT SMALL ANGSTY GIRL VIBE GOING ON, HONESTLY.

WHO KNOWS?

...WELL...

YOU TOO, ASOU-SAN?

OH, WELL. EVERYONE GOES THROUGH THE SAME THING AT THIS POINT OF THEIR LIVES.

JUST JOK-ING.

THAT'S HOW IT GETS DONE, DOESN'T IT?

.....

STACK UP A NEW FACADE OF MATURITY AT EVERY JUNCTURE OF YOUR LIFE, UNTIL ACTUAL MATURITY KICKS IN.

EH.

UH.

AND WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT SHOE-KUN BOY... SINCE YOUR ARRIVAL IN TOKYO?

.....

...WHO I WAS DEEP DOWN WASN'T GOING TO CHANGE OVERNIGHT...

WELL, NO MATTER HOW DRASTIC MY TRANS-FORMATION ON THE OUTSIDE...

AHAHA.

AH, YES. GOOD QUES-TION.

!

I'VE BEEN DOWN HIS APARTMENT SO MANY TIMES. BUT...

.....

WHY DIDN'T YOU TALK TO HIM?

MUST HAVE BEEN SOME MASSIVE CHANGE... FOR HIM NOT TO RECOGNIZE YOU

WELL... BECAUSE SHORTLY AFTER THAT...

WE...

.....?

.....

...I FOUND MYSELF IN THE STATE YOU SEE ME NOW.

I SHOULD HAVE PICKED MYSELF UP AND TALKED TO HIM.

...THEN AS YOU SAID, AGAWA-SAN...

IF THINGS WERE BOUND TO TURN OUT THIS WAY...

I SHOULD'VE TOLD HIM.

I SHOULD...

YEAH?

SHE'S STILL HIDING SOMETHING FROM US.

.....

I-IF YOU SAY SO...

I HAVE A FEELING THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THAT BOYFRIEND OF HERS SHE DOESN'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT.

SHE'S GOT TO KISS ME DESPITE ALREADY HAVING SOMEONE ELSE IN HER HEART.

POOR RENA.

YEAH. THAT MAKES PER-FECT SEN-SE...

I BET YOU'D BE HAPPY TO HAVE SOME GORGEOUS LADY TO KISS AT YOUR LEISURE.

UH?

.....

WHAT IF THE SAME DISEASE TURNED YOU INTO A CHILD?

I STILL WOULD NOT OBJECT TO DOING THE DEED.

IF I EVER BE-CAME A CHILD ...

I COULD TURN INTO WHATEVER, THAT SURELY WOULDN'T STOP YOU.

BUT IF YOU DO TURN INTO A CHILD AND I'M DATING YOU, WOULD I GET ARRESTED FOR DEVIANCY?

.....

IT'D BE BOUND TO HURT, THOUGH, SO BE GENTLE, OKAY?

YES.
IT'S AWFUL.

BUT AS FAR AS RENA IS CONCERNED, IT'S NOT JUST A JOKE...

...THAT'S KINDA AWFUL, DON'T YOU THINK?

I'M GLAD WE'VE BEEN SPARED THE SAME FATE... THANK GOD.

RENA'S PREDICAMENT IS A CRUEL ONE INDEED.

...I DO CONSIDER MYSELF FORTUNATE.

...AND THAT YOU RECIPR-OCATED IT...

CON-SIDERING THE FACT THAT I'VE BEEN ABLE TO NOTICE MY FEELINGS FOR YOU...

...BEFORE I EXP-ERIENCED THE SAME FATE AS RENA...

...THE FACT THAT I'VE BEEN ABLE TO CONFESS MY LOVE...

ASOU...
-SAN

IF I EVER WERE TO TURN INTO A CHILD RIGHT NOW...

...I WOULDN'T WANT TO KISS ANYONE ELSE BUT YOU

.....

I'D SHRINK AND I'D DIE, SURE. BUT I'D DO SO IN YOUR ARMS.

...I WANT YOU TO HOLD ME TIGHT, JUST LIKE THIS.

WHEN THAT HAPP-ENS...

OH

.....

BEET-
LES.

I ACT-
UALLY
CAUGHT A
COUPLE!

AWE-
SOME
!

MPH

MM-
PH.

:
:

I'M
WONDERING
IF I STILL
HAVE THAT
CAGE IN MY
CLOSET

I'LL
GIVE
THEM
TO
SHOE-
KUN
TOMO-
RROW

...AND SHOE-KUN? HOW COME?!

AYANA ...

WHAT THE..?

WH

UH...

第43話：不公平よ!!

CHAPTER 43 -
IT ISN'T FAIR!!

NO-HOW'S THAT POSSIBLE?!

KUN?

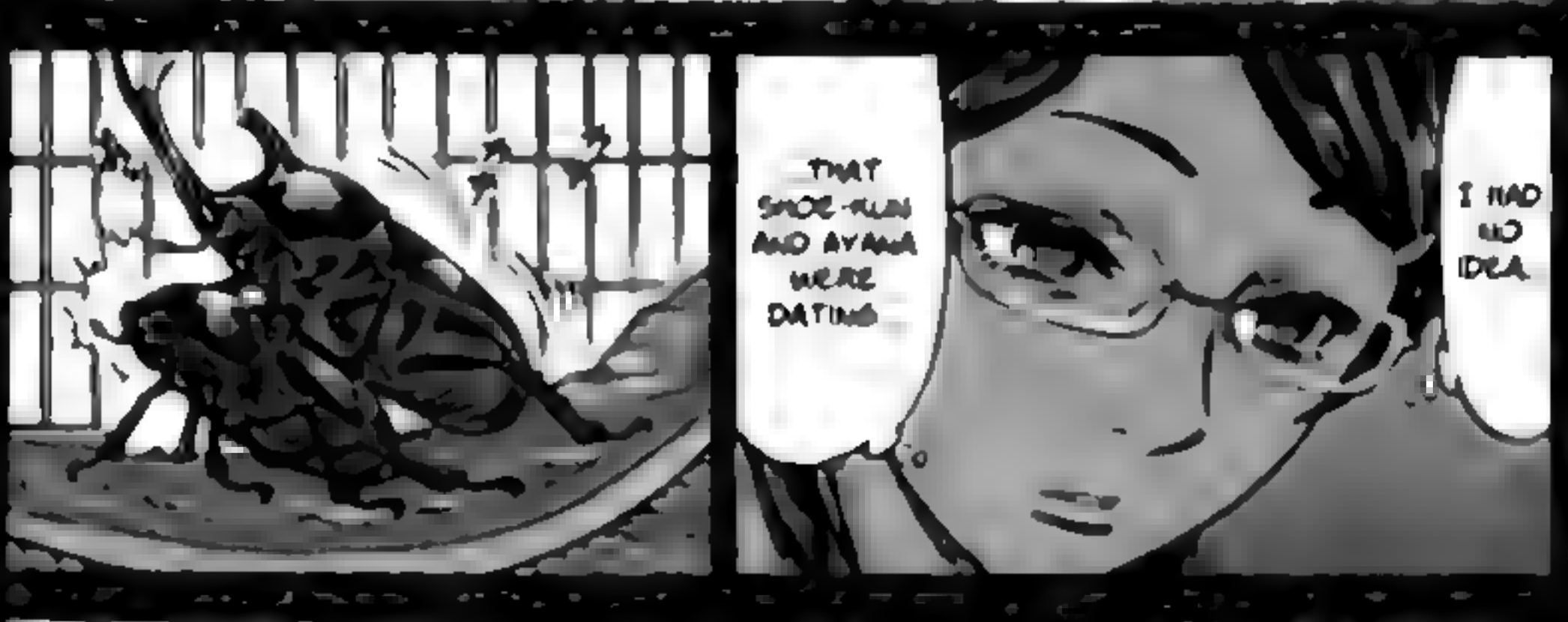
AYANA... AND SHOE-KUN?!

ドクン
ドクン
ドクン
ドクン
ドクン
ドクン

!!

!!

AHA...


THAT SHOE-RUN AND AYANA WERE DATING
I HAD NO IDEA

I'M BEING DEPRESSED RIGHT HERE. SHOW SOME DECENCY!!
HEY. THE HECK DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!

WHAT WOULD I LOOK LIKE IF I HANDED HIM THOSE BEETLES, NOW?

I SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN RID OF THEM.

THIS IS SILLY ...

...SHOE-KUN WAS JUST AS INTERESTED IN KISSING AS THE NEXT GUY.

TURNS OUT...

REFINEMENT, ELEGANCE... I WORKED VERY HARD TO GET ALL THOSE THINGS I LACKED...

...SO THAT HE MIGHT LOOK MY WAY...

SO I ENDEAVORED TO MAKE A SOMEWHAT MORE SUITABLE PERSON OF MYSELF...

...FAR ABOVE THAT SORT OF 'CONSID-ERATIONS...

FOR WHATEVER REASON... I'D PICTURED HIM AS SOME KIND OF 'NOBLE SOUL'...

ALL OF THIS...

HE WAS JUST LIKE ANY OTHER GUY...

...FOR HIM TO BE CONTENT WITH A GIRL LIKE AYANA, WHO JUST HAPPENS TO HAVE GOOD LOOKS...

...I EVER SAW HIM LOOK SO SUR-PRISED..

MUST HAVE BEEN THE FIRST TIME...

THIS IS WHAT SHOE-KUN LOOKS LIKE...

WHEN HE KISSES ...

WHY HELPING? I ADORE CANDLES FOR YOU.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING...

GIGGLE

...HERE IN THIS DARK LITTLE CORNER ..?

.....

AAAAAH BEETLES IN THE MIDDLE OF HAVING SEX.

CAME AS QUITE THE SUR-PRISE.

I HAD NO IDEA YOU WERE WATCHING.

DID YOU SEE US?

.....

.....

UUUUUUH?

DID YOU... START TO DATE SHOE-KUN?

WHEN DID YOU...

.....

IT WAS GETTING DARK SO I ASKED IF HE COULD WALK ME HOME, SO HE KINDA TAGGED ALONG.

I INVITED HIM TO A FAMILY RESTAURANT, AND THEN WE TALKED FOR A BIT...

FIRST STARTED TALKED TO HIM TODAY, DURING NOON BREAK.

AH. YEAH.

HOW DID IT HAPPEN AGAIN?

WELL, JUST LOOK AT THE BEET-LES.

AND THEN ...

ANYTHING WILL DO, AS FAR AS HE'S CON-CERNED.

NOT SO SURE IT'S WORTH IT.

AND HERE YOU ARE, GOING ALL THE WAY TO TOKYO JUST TO PURSUE HIM.

A GUY LIKE THAT... ...CAN JUST GO TO HELL...

I... I DON'T CARE...

...TO LIVE ALONE IN TOKYO..!

I'M GETTING OUT OF THIS HOLE...

...WHERE I NEED NOT SUFFER YOUR PRESENCE!!

I'M GONNA LIVE SOME-PLACE...

AH...

FROM THAT POINT ON, I WOULDN'T SPEAK TO SHOE-KUN WHILE AT SCHOOL.

...WITHOUT EVER EXCHANGING A SINGLE WORD...

WE GRADUATED AND WENT TO TOKYO...

SHOULD YOU COME TO LIVE WITH YOUR SISTER NEXT YEAR, FEEL FREE TO DROP BY.

SURE. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR HELP.

.....

SHE MUST HAVE BEEN BUSY.

HAHA!

ULTI-MATELY, MY SISTER DIDN'T SHOW HERSELF AT ALL.

PRETTY MUCH DUMPED ME THERE FOR YOU TO TAKE CARE OF, SHE DID.

I TAKE IT SHE'S STILL ANGRY AT ME...

...BUT SERIOUS AS SHE IS, I BET SHE'S STILL AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE, OBSERVING ME.

THE FIRST THING I DID UPON ARRIVING IN TOKYO...

...WAS TO GET MYSELF A NIJIBARA HAIRDO!!

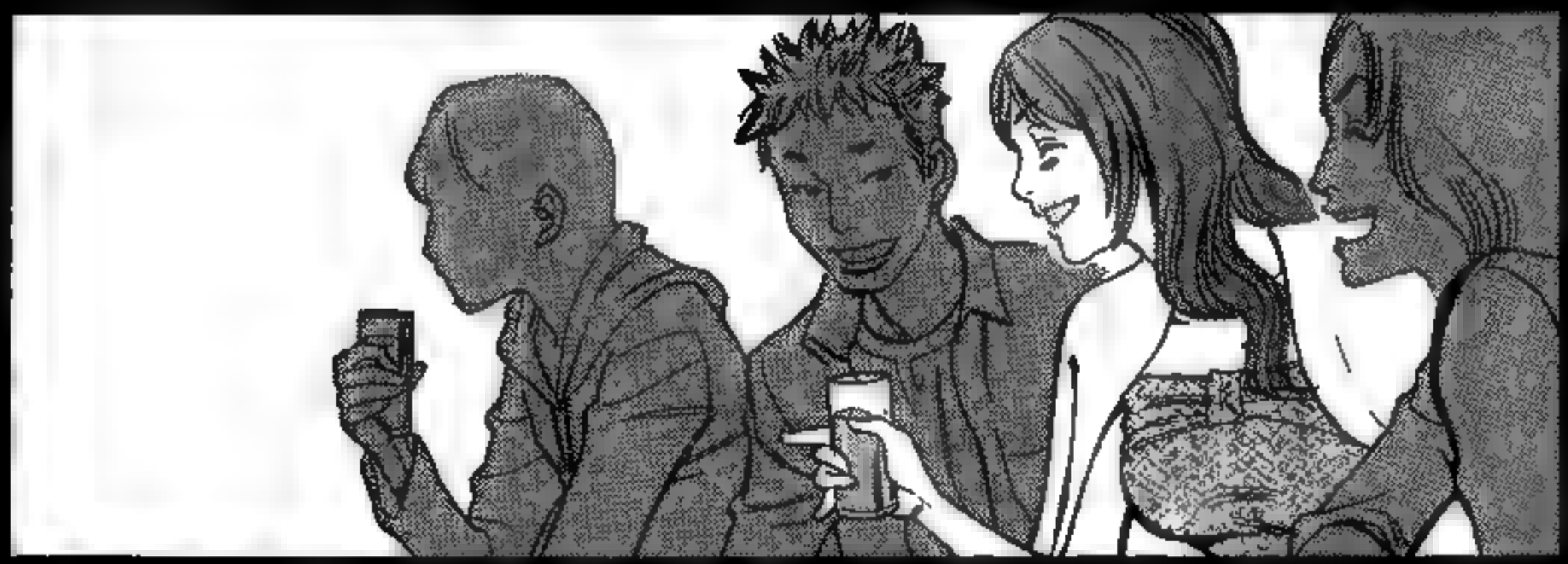
...AND ATTEND MY UNIVERSITY DEBUT, JUST AS INTENDED.

OF COURSE I'M ANGRY AT YOU!

STUPID.

.....

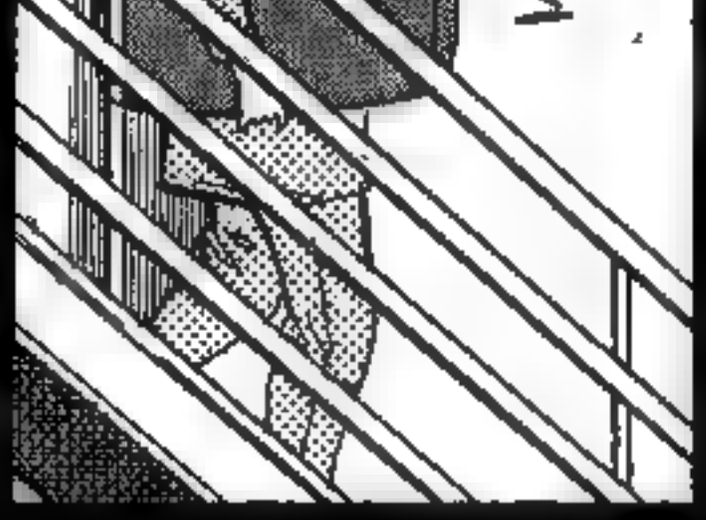
SHOE-KUN CAN JUST GO TO HELL.

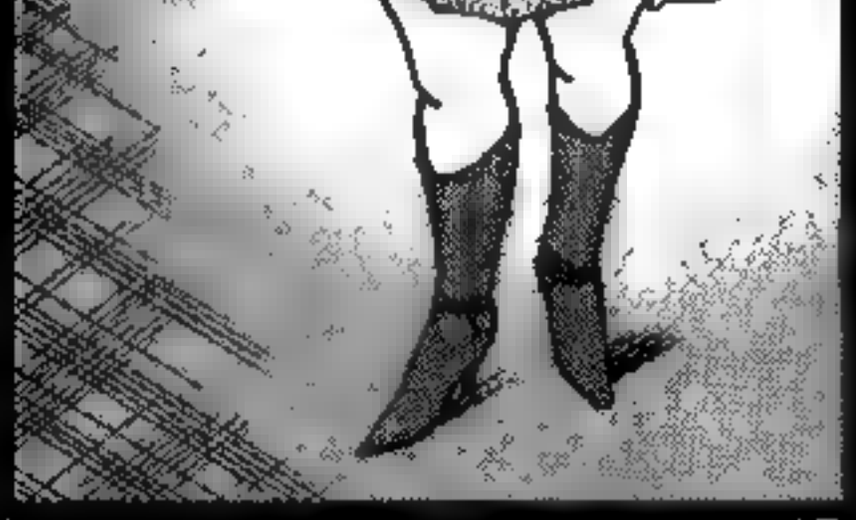


IN TRUTH...

...THE REAL ME...

!





...WANTED ONLY ONE THING, AND THAT WAS TO BE WITH SHOE-KUN.

THE REAL ME...

I'D FILED UP WAY TOO MUCH STUFF, SO I HAD IT ALL SENT HOME BY EXPRESS DELIVERY

OKAY ♡

WHERE IS YOUR LUG GAGE?

AH, IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU BETTER STEP IN.

SHE'LL GET THE WRONG IDEA IF A GUY SO MUCH AS LOOKS AT HER SIDE-WAYS

SEE, SHE'S SUCH A STRAIGHT-LACED PERSON.

SEND RENA MY REGARDS

...SO I'M WORRIED ABOUT SOMEONE GETTING THE BETTER OF HER

SHE'S PRETTY MUCH CLUELESS WHEN IT COMES TO MEN...

YOU'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF HER, I'M SU.
YOU SURE CARE ABOUT YOUR SISTER, DON'T YOU?

21

AREN'T YOU THAT GIRL FROM YESTER-DAY?
.....?
RE...
RENA?!

UH?

YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED AT ALL. NOT. ONE. BIT...

STILL ACTING LIKE YOU'RE THE SINGLE BEST THING SINCE SLICED BREAD...

...WHILE YOU STILL REMAIN THE SAME!

LOOK HOW MUCH I HAVE CHANGED...

IT ISN'T FAIR!!

A... AND YOU ARE?

HUH?

.....

第44話: かわいそうに。

WH- WHAT D'YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING ...

...RENA ?!

WHAT THE?

...BUT ...

WHAAAT?!

I... IMP- OSS- IBLE ...

CHAPTER 44 - THAT'S PATHETIC ALRIGHT

P-POS-SIBLY BE...

...RENA?!

Y... YOU CAN'T ...

第44話: かわいそうに◎

I'M YOUR OLDER SISTER. AMAMI RENA.

THAT'S RIGHT.

A-AYANA-CHAN, IT'S ALL A BIT COMPLICATED

.....

AHAH...

THE-THE TRAIN SEEMS TO BE KINDA LATE, SO I SUGEST TALKING THIS OVER...

AHA HAH AHA HAH!

AHAH...

NOW THAT WAS...

...REAAA-AALLY FUNNY!

SHE MUST BE HIDING SOME-WHERE AROUND HERE, WATCH-ING.

A PRANK FROM RENA, I TAKE IT?

AHA HAHA!

GOOD JOB FINDING THAT GIRL. SHE'S LIKE THE SPITTING IMAGE OF A YOUNGER RENA

I... I'LL BE ON MY WAY...

THANK YOU FOR EVERY-THING.

COME ON OVER HERE.

NOW YOU'VE GOT NO CHOICE BUT TO TELL YOUR PARENTS...

...THIS SOUNDS LIKE ABOUT AS GOOD AN OPPORTUNITY AS YOU'LL EVER GET, I'D SAY...

.....

WELL... BUT...

WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?!

THE WHOLE OPERATION HAD BEEN RUNNING SO SMOOTHLY...

...ALL FOR NOTHING!!

BUT STILL, WHAT WERE THE LAST COUPLE OF DAYS ALL ABOUT, HUH?

...IS THAT YOU DIDN'T WANT YOUR SISTER TO FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR CONDITION, AM I RIGHT?

IN TRUTH, THE ONLY REASON YOU HADN'T TOLD YOUR FAMILY SO FAR...

ガタタ

ガタタ

ブロロロ

HAVE YOU SEEN IT?

SHE DIDN'T HAVE THE SLIGHTEST IDEA OF WHAT WAS GOING ON...

THAT LOOK ON HER FACE ...

...AND SHE NEVER MISSED A CHANCE TO MAKE FUN OF ME.

SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN ASHAMED OF HER FAILURE OF AN OLDER SISTER...

HAHA...

SER-
VES
YOU
RIGHT
...

WH...
WHAT
THE...

!

...RENA
...

IS THAT
REALLY
YOU?

I-I
THOUGHT
IT JUST
COULDN'T
BE TRUE...

BUT...

BUT
...

YO... YOUR
EYES ARE
SO MUCH
LIKE HERS...

SISTER... IS THAT REALLY YOU?

SUCH A DISEASE CAN'T EXIST...

I...INCR-EDIBLE.

WE'VE FOUND A MEANS OF INTERRUPTING THE PROCESS SO AT LEAST, SHE'LL BE FINE FOR NOW.

A METH-OD? LIKE WHAT?

...AND THAT'S SUPPOSED TO END UP HOW, EXACTLY?

SO SHE QUICKLY TURNS BACK INTO A CHILD...

...DO YOU STILL RESENT ME ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED WITH SHOE-KUN?

WHY, ...

.....

DON'T FEEL OBLIGATED TO APPEAR AS IF YOU WERE CON-CERNED.

I DID WHAT I DID, BUT BELIEVE ME OR NOT I HAD YOUR BEST INTERESTS AT HEART...

HE DOESN'T INTEREST ME IN THE LEAST.

YOU COULD NEVER STOP YOURSELF FROM DOING SOMETHING IN THE PAST, PROVIDED IT UPSET ME!

LEARN TO KEEP YOUR BIG FAT MOUTH SHUT!

YOU'D PRETTY MUCH PUT HIM ON SOME KIND OF PEDESTAL, LOOSING YOUR SENSE OF SELF IN THE PROCESS. I JUST HAD TO SNAP YOU OUT OF IT...

HOW'S IT FEEL TO BE ABLE TO DO SO LITERALLY?

YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN LOOKING DOWN ON ME.

COME ON, LAUGH AT ME. I KNOW YOU WANT TO.

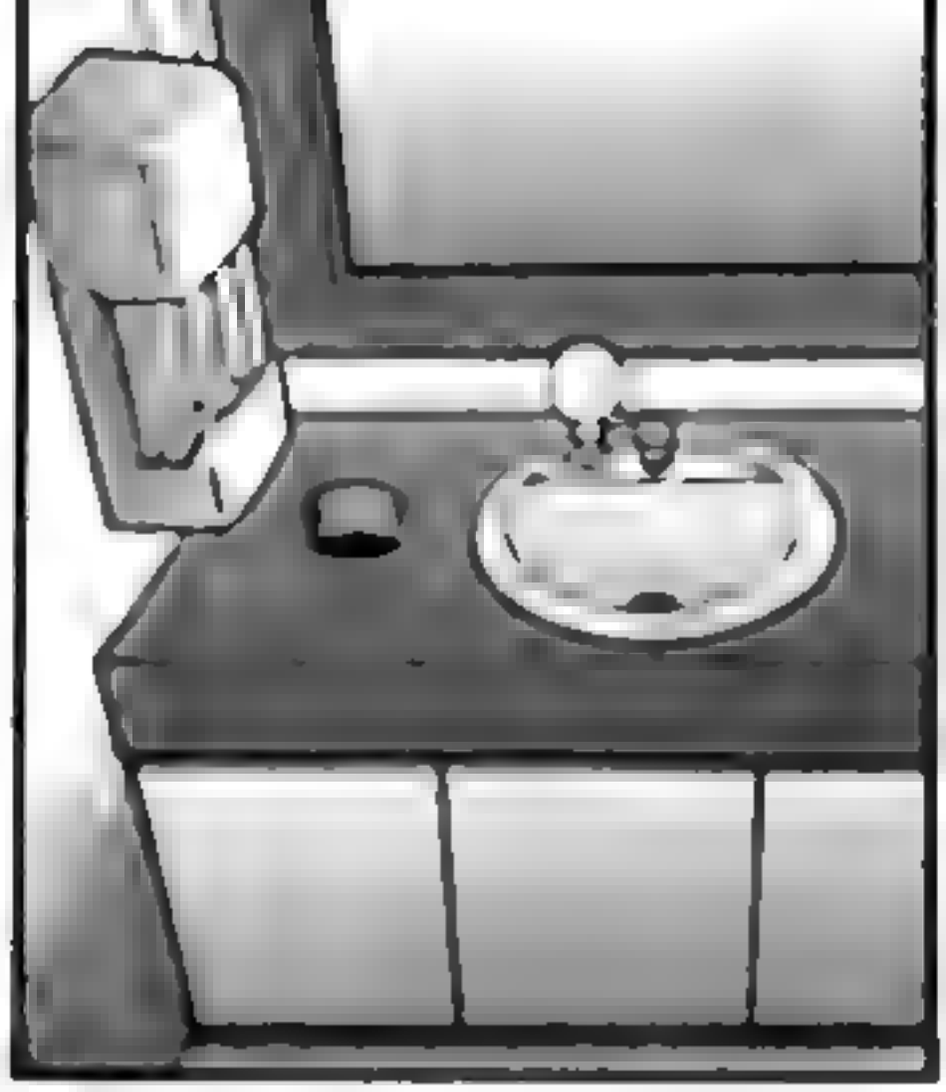
.....

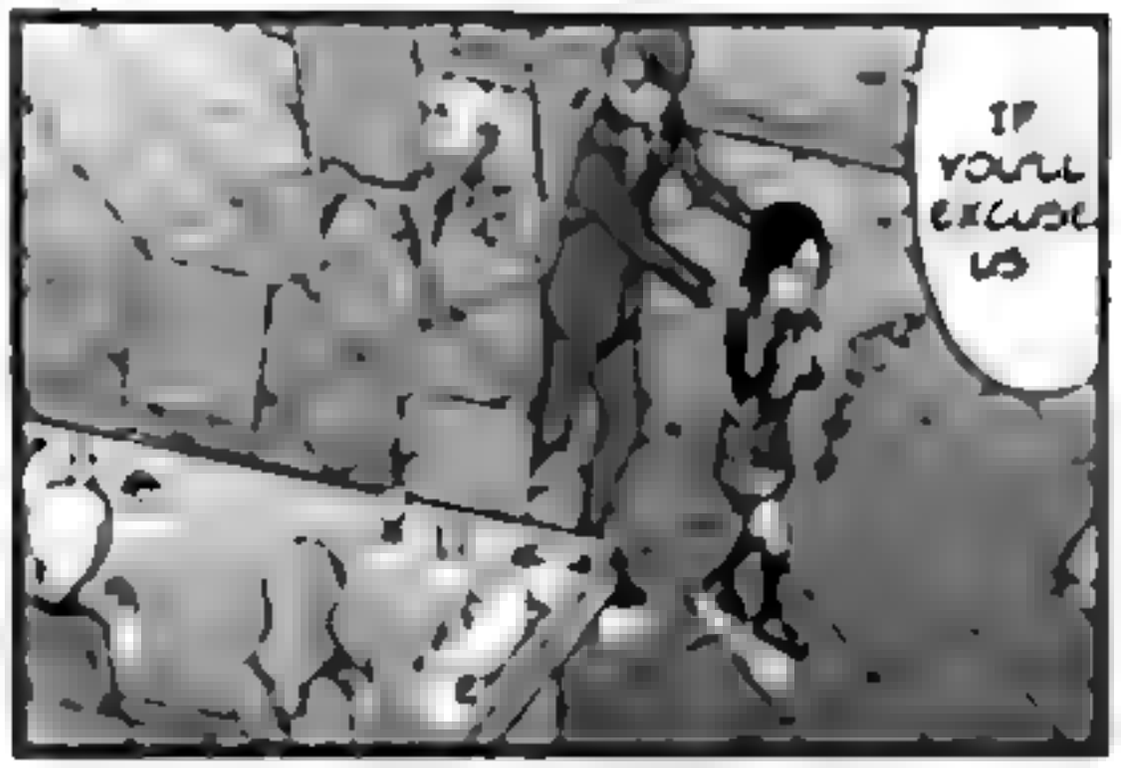
.....

AHA-HAHA!

UNLESS, MAYBE HAVING A SISTER LIKE ME'S GONNA MAKE IT THAT MUCH HARDER TO GET THE GUYS?

ハァハァ
.....
?
SFX. GWEEE GURRRGLLLL
...I-I'LL BE FINE. WE HAVE MORE PRESSING MATTERS AT HAND RIGHT NOW...
ARE YOU OKAY?
SHE DIDN'T TAKE HER ENZYME LAST NIGHT. THAT WOULD EXPLAIN IT...
ASOU-SAN...
.....
ハァハァ




IF YOU'LL EXCUSE US

THANK GOODNESS THE TOILETS SEEM CLEAN ENOUGH

THERE AIN'T MUCH ROOM HERE SO EASY, MINA!?

DO NOT MIND ...

I'M SOR-RY.

SORRY FOR DRAGGING YOU INTO THIS MESS WHILE YOU SHOULD BE AT YOUR OFFICE, WORKING.

STILL, YOU'RE NOT QUITE YOUR USUAL SELF TODAY.

14

DIS-ENCH-ANTED YET?

RENA'S BEEN WEARING SEVERAL FACADES, TOO. LAYER UPON LAYER OF THEM.

THIS FACET OF ME YOU'VE SEEN SO FAR HAS ALWAYS BEEN A LIE.

ALL THE FACETS OF YOU I'VE SEEN SO FAR

SEE

WELL, I WOULD NOT SAY THAT

I JUST CAN'T PICTURE IT

I DON'T CONSIDER THEM TO BE LIES

WAIT

I TH- (INK) I

BUT I STOPPED MYSELF.

AS SUPERFICIAL AS THE FEELING IS, I WANTED TO SAY IT: "I THINK I'M STARTING TO FALL FOR YOU."

AH...

AHEM ...

YOU TOOK THE BOY RENA LOVED AWAY FROM HER, DIDN'T YOU?

TELL ME...

.....

WHAT DID AGAWA-SAN AND RENA GO AWAY FOR?

...HONESTLY, I WAS WORRIED ABOUT HER.

TH-THAT'S HOW SHE PUT IT, BUT...

UH?

I WANTED TO CHECK OUT THIS GUY, SEE IF HE WAS HONEST AND ALL. SO I JUST, KINDA INVITED HIM. NOTHING SERIOUS.

MY SISTER'S SO SERIOUS, SO INTROVERTED A PERSON. WHEN I HEARD HER TALKING LIKE THAT...

SHE WAS LIKE, GOING ALL THE WAY TO TOKYO, TO LIVE ON HER OWN. ALL JUST SO SHE COULD RUN AFTER A GUY.

WH-WHO CARES ABOUT HER?

WH-WHY YA BRINGING AMAMI INTO THIS?

YOU AND RENA STILL AREN'T THERE YET?

.....

BEING SO COOL, AND ALL.

DON'T TELL ME YOU'VE NEVER KISSED A GIRL, SHOE-KUN.

WHUUUU ?

COME ON, I WON'T TELL HER A THING.

WHAT'S THE HOLD UP, THEN?

...HE WAS THE SHALLOW KIND OF GUY READY TO KISS AT THE DROP OF A HAT.

IN THE END ...

I WANT MY KISS, SHOE-KUN.

.....

GIMME.

I WANTED... TO CALL HER BACK...

HONE-STLY ...

NOT QUITE. TURNS OUT SHE'D BEEN PEEKING AT US THE WHOLE TIME...

SO YOU EXPOSED HIM AS SUCH TO YOUR SISTER, THEN?

A... SHAL-LOW GUY, EH?

NOW THAT'S JUST PATH-ETIC...

RENA'S LOVE...

...WAS SOMETHING YOU HAD TROUBLE COPING WITH OR WHATEVER.

SO IT'S NOT LIKE RENA HAVING FEELINGS FOR SHOE-KUN...

...KILLED IN ITS CRADLE BY HER OWN SISTER

20

20

.....

THE POOR THING.

.....

第45話：あなたのことよ。

CHAPTER 45--
THAT WAS DIRECTED AT YOU!

THERE YOU HAVE IT...

2

EVERYONE ALWAYS STICKS UP FOR HER...

FUNNY.

AS FAR AS I RECALL, THE GROWN UPS ALWAYS SAW HER AS THE TRUST-WORTHY ONE, AND JUST COULDN'T STOP SWOONING OVER HER.

WHAT WITH HER ALWAYS BEING THE ONE WHO WAS "GOOD FOR SOMETHING".

SOME SISTERS, YOU MAKE...

YOU'VE BOTH BEEN HARBORING A NASTY INFERIORITY COMPLEX TOWARDS ONE ANOTHER, I SEE.

...AREN'T LOOKING AT THE SAME PERSON?

MAYBE YOU AND I...

...RENA'S NOT QUITE AS BRILLIANT AND SUCCESSFUL AS YOU MAKE HER OUT TO BE.

BUT FROM WHERE I'M STANDING...

.....

.....

!!

DID YOU THINK THAT BRINGING SHOE-KUN DOWN WOULD LET YOU GET THE BEST OF HER?

YOU MUST HAVE BEEN HAPPY.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO BE ABLE TO HURT YOUR SISTER SO?

4

THAT WAS DIREC-TED AT YOU.

WHEN I TALKED ABOUT "PATHETIC" EARLIER.

HOW I PITY YOU.

OVER A MATTER SO TRIVIAL, YOU WERE READY TO LOCK LIPS WITH A GUY YOU FOR WHOM YOU DIDN'T FEEL ANYTHING.

HOW ABOUT I SHOW YOU?

IT'S BEEN LIKE FOR-EVER ...

WHA... WHAT'S TAKING THEM SO LONG ...?

5

rest room

...IF YOU SAW FOR YOURSELF WHAT TRULY BECAME OF YOUR SISTER.

I ASSUME IT'D BE FOR THE BEST...

キィ…

……

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キィ…

キィ…

R...
RENA?
WH..
WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING..?

.....

...SHE MUST IMPERATIVELY RELY ON A SPECIAL ENZYME THAT HAPPENS TO BE IN HIS SALIVA.

IN ORDER TO PUT A STOP TO HER DISEASE'S PROG-RESSION...

...AT LEAST AS LONG AS SHE INTENDS TO STAY ALIVE.

AGAWA-KUN IS NOT EVEN HER LOVER, YET SHE'S DOOMED TO KISS HIM FOREVER...

THAT WAS CRUEL ...

.....

SHE'S THE LAST PERSON... THE VERY LAST ONE...

GET OUT OF MY FACE !!

...I WANT-ED TO SEE ME!!

WHO TOLD YOU TO SHOW HEEER ?!!

THAT WAS LOW!

WHY DID YOU HAVE TO SHOW HER THIS OF ALL THINGS?!!

LOW, YOU HEAR ME!!

YOU...

RENA...

YOU...

YOU WHO'VE ALWAYS BEEN LOOKING DOWN UPON ME, FROM HIGH ABOVE.

HEH

...WHO WERE ALWAYS GOOD AT ANYTHING YOU TRIED...

YOU...

...THE RENA WHO'S ALWAYS HAD MOM AND DAD SINGING YOUR PRAISES...

...JUST ABOUT NOTHING THAT YOU COULDN'T DO...

THERE WAS...

WHATEVER HAPPENED...

...THAT TURNED YOU INTO THIS TINY LITTLE THING ..?!!

RENAA-
AAAAA!!

AYANA-
AAAAA!

14

.....

なんなの…

I GUESS... MOST ANYONE WOULD FEEL SOME MEASURE OF SYMPATHY.

AND ODDS ARE, ASOU-SAN FEELS THE SAME.

IT HAPPENED FOR RUU-KUN...

...AND FOR ME...

ONCE YOU LEARN ABOUT RENA'S ILLNESS, IT'S EASY TO FEEL BAD FOR HER.

...PROBABLY NO ONE WAS GOING TO SHED ACTUAL TEARS FOR HER...

BUT ASIDE FROM HER OWN FAMILY...

UM...

YUP. SEE, I'VE GOT A SPECIALIZED MEDIC ON MY CASE.

RENA ...

...YOU'LL BE OKAY, YOU'RE SURE?

I BELIEVE COME SPRINGTIME, I'LL BE ABLE TO TALK TO THEM.

WELL ...

THEY'D BETTER HEAR IT ALL FROM ME.

WHAT ABOUT MOM AND DAD..?

AGAWA-SAN AND ASOU-SAN ARE THERE, TOO. THEY'LL HAVE MY BACK.

I'LL BE OKAY. ♡

SPRING-TIME?

PLEASE TAKE GOOD CARE OF HER.

I'M NOT SUCH A CHILD, YOU KNOW.

YOU'VE BECOME QUITE PROFICIENT WITH ETIQUETTE, I SEE.

SURE. YOU CAN COUNT ON US.

17

FAMILY'S FAMILY...

AND BECAUSE OF THAT, THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS COMPLETELY BREAKING AWAY... BUMMER.

.....

YOU'VE BEEN ABLE TO RECONCILE IN THE END I CALL THAT A GOOD THING.

NOTHING REPLACES FAMILY, EH.

NOTHING TO SNEEZE AT, THAT WAS.

THANKS TO WHICH I'VE BEEN ABLE TO PEEK A GLANCE AT YOUR TRUE FACE. THE ONE YOU KEPT HIDDEN.

...ONCE YOU'VE SPENT LONG ENOUGH TIME BEING A WOMAN, YOU ALWAYS END UP WITH A FACET HERE AND THERE THAT YOU'D RATHER NOT SHOW ANYONE!

WE- WELL ...

NAAAAH. BE VERY RUDE TO START LAUGHING, RIGHT NOW.

PFF

"ONCE YOU'VE BEEN A WOMAN LONG ENOUGH", EH...

19

SHE'S AN ADULT WOMAN WHO'S KNOWN LOVE. WHOSE HEART HAS RACED IN THE THROES OF PASSION, AND WHO'S BEEN HURT BECAUSE OF IT.

SHE MAY LOOK LIKE A 10 YEAR OLD, BUT SHE'S STILL 19 INSIDE.

PFFF...

HH HH

...SHE'S NOT ALL THAT DIFFERENT ...

COMPARED TO A GUY LIKE ME WHO UNTIL RECENTLY, HAD BEEN NURSING A HEARTBREAK GOING BACK TO HIS TEENAGE DAYS...

"BEEN A WOMAN LONG ENOUGH?" I MEAN, LOOK AT YOU!

... SORRY ...

I JUST ...

HEH HEH HEH...

CHAPTER 46 -
I COULD TAKE YOU WITH ME

第46話：
引っ張ってあげよっか？

Lèvre

EVERY BUSINESSMAN AT LEVRES IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SEVERAL STORES, ON TOP OF WHICH HE SUPERVISES THE BEAUTY ADVISORS (BA) TEAMS DISPATCHED THERE.

PLEASURE WORKING WITH YOU

PLEA-SURE WORKING WITH YOU

...THE ONE HERE AT THE HOKUTO DEPARTMENT STORE.

WE'RE NOW AMONG THE TOP FIVE DEPARTMENT STORES IN TOWN.

I HAPPEN TO HAVE SEVERAL SUCH SHOPS UNDER MY CARE, BUT ONE OF THEM IS OF PARTICULARLY GREAT IMPORTANCE...

WOOHOO!

THE INCREASE IN FOUNDATION CREAM SALES PARTICULARLY STANDS OUT.

やったー

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キャッ

YAAAAAAY!

EVERYONE OF YOU'S BEEN WORKING HARD TOWARDS OUR GOAL. IT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU GUYS.

WE'VE BEEN CONSISTENTLY MAKING IT TO THE TOP 5.

JUST AS YOU'D PLANNED. EH, CHIEF?

LET'S FACE IT. I POSITIVELY LOVE THAT STORE.

...BUT THE NEARBY NANBU DEPARTMENT STORE PUTS A DAMPER ON THAT.

IF ALL THE STORES UNDER MY CARE WERE PLEASING LIKE THAT ONE, I MIGHT EVEN HAVE COME TO ENJOY MY WORK...

THIS STORE IS JUST GREAT. NOTHING SHORT OF AWESOME.

THIS IS OUR LIMITED EDITION ARTICLE FOR THIS WINTER.

THANKS TO THEIR "CHIEF", KONNO-SAN'S LEADERSHIP THEY WORK IN UNISON, AND PRODUCE RESULTS WELL ABOVE THE COMPANY'S STATED REQUIREMENTS.

THE RESULTS OF OUR SALES FOR LAST MONTH ARE OUT.

I MMMM

I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ONE TOO.

WE AREN'T QUITE DEAD LAST.

THANK GOODNESS

32ND!!

AMONG ALL THE DEPARTMENT STORES IN TOWN, THIS ONE RANKS...

YOU NEED TO PUT SOME WORK INTO IT.

YEAH, WELL, CONSIDERING THE LOCATION, AND ATTENDANCE RATE AND ALL, THESE FIGURES MAKE NO SENSE!

AHEM.

THE HOKUTO STORE NEARBY MADE IT TO THE TOP FIVE YET AGAIN, BY THE WAY.

WE'RE STANDING WAY TOO FAR FROM THE ENTRANCE, WHICH MEANS WE DON'T SEE THAT MANY PEOPLE EITHER.

...AND COMPARED TO THE OTHER COSMETICS FLOORS, LEVRES GOT THE SHORT END OF THE STICK WHEN IT COMES TO PLACEMENT.

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THIS FOR A WHILE...

YES, KAGO-SAN.

BY THE WAY, GOTOU-SAN, WHO'S IN CHARGE OF LEVRES HERE HAPPENS TO BE A NANBU EMPLOYEE.

カチ

I BELIEVE THEY'RE DISCRIMINATING AGAINST US LEVRES, HERE AT NANBU.

THE BA STAFF DISPATCHED HERE BY LEVRES CLEARLY POSE GREATER PROBLEMS THAN THOSE AT THE HOKUTO STORE DO.

WELL, I HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY TOO.

AH!!

NOT EVERYONE OF COURSE, BUT SOME CLEARLY DO.

...IT SCREAMS HOW MUCH BETTER YOU THINK KONNO-SAN FROM HOKUTO IS!!

LOOK AT YOUR FACE...

Y... YOU DON'T UNDER ...

UH?

A-AGAWA-SAN, YOU THINK THE HOKUTO STORE IS BETTER THAN US, DON'T YOU?

A-AGE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT!

KO... KONNO-SAN IS AS OLD AS I AM, YOU KNOW?

AND WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "YOU KNOW" ?

AND A BA WHO'S GOOD WITH MAKEUP IS BAD HOW, EXACTLY?

ANY GUY WOULD FALL FOR IT!

KONNO-SAN LOOKS GORGEOUS, BUT THAT'S CAUSE SHE'S GOOD WITH MAKEUP.

THERE. HE DIDN'T SEE A THING.

WHUUU ?!

AGAWA-SAN! WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON? OURS, OR THAT OF HOKUTO?!!

WH-WHOSE SIDE I'M ON ?!

HOW DID I GET DRAGGED INTO THIS?

PFAH. BORING.

THAT THEY WERE BOTH IMPORTANT PARTNERS TO ME.

...WELL

SO. WHAT DID YOU SAY, THEN?

WELL, YA SEE ...

WHAT SHOULD I HAVE TOLD THEM, THEN?

SIGH... OH, WELL ...

MAN, YOU'RE GETTING GOOD RESULTS OUT OF HOKUTO, IF NOTHING ELSE. I ENVY YOU.

THE YOUNG POPULAR AND CHARISMATIC OFFICE LADY ASOU SAYAKO-SAN SHALL ANSWER OUR QUESTIONS.

♡

TODAY, WE'LL BE BOTHERING LEVRES' PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT!!

STARTED OUT AT THE SAME TIME, WE DID IN DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS, SURE. BUT WHY AM I TRAILING SO FAR BEHIND, EATING HER DUST..?

TV'S DOWN-STAIRS FILMING, RIGHT NOW!

ASOU-SAN IS THE WOMAN BEHIND THE FAMOUS LIPS SANCTUARY CAMPAIGN THAT DRASTICALLY INCREASED...

WEL-COME HOME

HEADED HOME STRAIGHT AFTER THE INTERVIEW —

YUP

YOU CAME BACK EARLY

WHAT IS THAT SMELL...?

SNIFF……

NOT MUCH, BUT STILL

I SAW YOU BACK AT THE COMPANY

I'M HOME.

AH, SURE.

WELCOME BACK ♡

DIDN'T YOU SAY SOMETHING ABOUT BEING LATE TODAY?

10

LET'S BE HONEST HERE. YOU ACTUALLY MEANT TO COOK FOR YOUR BOYFRIEND, DIDN'T YOU?

THOUGHT TODAY AT LEAST I COULD TREAT YOU TO HOMEMADE COOKING.

I ALWAYS GET INVITED TO EAT OUT BY THE TWO OF YOU.

MMM...

TEEHEE

BUT HE TURNED YOU DOWN BECAUSE HE'D ALREADY PLANNED TO GO OUT FOR A DRINK WITH HIS CLUBMATES.

KI-KINDA BENEFITS US IN THE END, EH.

HAHA...

I-I SEE.

.....

.....

I CAN'T HELP AT ALL.

THING IS...

NOTHING WRONG WITH EATING AT HOME EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO BE SO MEAN ABOUT IT.

WHO SAID ANYTING ABOUT "WRONG" ?

SIGH...

.....

TN: ASOU'S PROBABLY INEPT AT COOKING, WHICH IN JAPAN IS A SIGNIFICANT FLAW FOR ANY WOMAN TO HAVE. HENCE HER REACTION.

IT'S OKAY.

I'VE SEEN YOU AT IT EARLIER, AND TURNS OUT I'VE BEEN BETTER OFF ON MY OWN.

SHOE-KUN SAID IT WAS JUST A DRINKING PARTY!!

HEY. I HEARD THAT...

ASOU-SAN!!

TELL YOU WHAT. YOUR BOY-FRIEND'S NOT OUT FOR A DRINK, HE'S AT A GOUKON.

THAT'S RIGHT. A *GOUKON*.

ASOU-SAN ?!

HE MUST BE BUSY WITH SOME SMOKING HOT LADY AS WE SPEAK.

C'MON RENA, DON'T TAKE HER SERIOUSLY, DAMNIT!!

HE CAN'T EXACTLY SPEAK HIS MIND TO SOME GIRL IN PRIMARY SCHOOL NOW, CAN HE?

AND YOU BELIEV-ED HIM?

TN: GOUKON - A PARTY WHERE THE PARTICIPANTS BELONG TO SEVERAL COMPANIES/COLLEGES, AND GATHER TOGETHER FOR THE EXPLICIT PURPOSE OF FINDING A DATE.

NOW I GET TO DEAL WITH THAT SHIT AT HOME TOO?!!

AAAAAAH~

13

...EVEN TAKING SECONDS TO BOOT

DESPITE ALL THAT CRAP SHE GIVES, ASOU-SAN IS NOT ABOVE EATING EVERYTHING...

YOU WANTED TO CHARM HIM WITH MEAT AND POTATO STEW? HOW OLD-FASHIONED OF YOU...

ELSA

AAAAA

BE WELL.

SEE YOU TOMOR-ROW.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

AND THANKS FOR THE MEAL.

...YEAH.

SURE. GOOD NIGHT TO YOU! TAKE CARE.

...THAT THE THREE OF US HAD GOTTEN USED TO LIVING TOGETHER WITHOUT EVEN NOTICING.

I HAD THAT FEEL-INGS...

THE YOUNG POPULAR AND CHARISMATIC OFFICE LADY ASOU SAYAKO-SAN SHALL ANSWER OUR QUESTIONS.

TODAY, WE'LL BE BOTHERING LEVRES' PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT!!

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

THAT TODAY'S INTER-VIEW?

YUP IT'S BEEN TAPED.

16

I BELIEVE WE NEED TO ESTABLISH A MAKEUP METHOD GEARED TOWARDS DIGITAL BROAD-CASTING.

THIS OUGHT TO HELP GENERATE NEW DEMAND...

THE THING WITH TV IS THAT ONCE DIGITALIZED, IT LETS YOU SEE JUST HOW GOOD OR BAD YOU'VE BEEN DOING WITH YOUR MAKEUP.

I WASN'T SO CONFIDENT IN THE TV STAFF MEMBER'S MAKEUP SKILLS, SO I TOOK CARE OF IT MYSELF.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

YOU LOOK GOOD ENOUGH.

WELL, YEAH.

YOU CAN EVEN SELF-PRODUCE_ I'M IMPRESSED

.....

...I'M KINDA TIRED TODAY, THOUGH.

BUT I LIKE IT BEST AU NATUREL.

HAHA ♡

IF YOU THINK YOU *CAN* SLEEP, BE MY GUEST.

YOU DON'T MIND A DEAD LAY?

_I'LL DO YOU IN YOUR SLEEP, THEN.

HAH

HAH

HAH

HA_

_HA

HAH

HAH

HAH

HAH

HAH

HAH

HAEEH

WH-WHY DO YOU ASK?

.....

HEY.

DO YOU HATE IT IN SALES?

BECAUSE... YOU'VE BEEN A LOT MORE ROUGH THAN USUAL?

I COULD TAKE YOU WITH ME. HOW'S PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT SOUND, AGAWA-KUN?

!?

.....

CHAPTER 47 - I'LL DO IT!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO ENTER THE PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT?

MAYBE THAT WOULD APPEAL MORE TO YOU?

第47話：やってやるさ！

.....

I JUST CAN'T STAND THE SIGHT OF YOU WITH THAT CONSTANT FORCED SMILE ON YOUR FACE...

I CAN TELL. I DID IT FOR A WHILE WHEN I ENTERED THE COMPANY, FOR TRAINING PURPOSES.

YOU HATE SALES... DON'T YOU?

.....

TOO BAD. AND HERE I THOUGHT WE'D BE ABLE TO WORK TOGETHER...

NAH, I'VE GOT NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

A... HAHAHA.

2

SHE CAN'T STAND THE SIGHT OF ME WITH THAT CONSTANT FORCED SMILE ON MY FACE?

IS THAT SO?

IT'S GOT TO BE SOME KIND OF JOKE.

IT'S NOT LIKE ASOU-SAN HAS THAT KIND OF AUTHORITY.

WHAT KIND OF IDIOT WOULD FALL FOR SUCH AN OFFER FROM HIS GIRLFRIEND? SOUNDS WAY TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.

.....

.....

THE KING OF ALL DIVISIONS. EVERYONE WOULD KILL TO GET THERE...

PUB-LIC-ITY...

OKAY, I'LL ADMIT I'M NOT THRILLED ABOUT THE WHOLE SALES DEPARTMENT DEAL.

BUT IT'S NOT LIKE I EVER TOLD ANYONE ABOUT IT.

IS IT REALLY WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE..?

...AND DECADES LATER, PEOPLE WILL STILL BE TALKING ABOUT IT.

WORKING AS A CREATIVE SURE SOUNDS COOL...

LAUNCH A SUCCESSFUL ENOUGH ADVERT-ISEMENT CAMPAIGN...

!!

SO? DO YOU FEEL LIKE IT, NOW?

...OF COURSE NOT...

WHY SHOU-LD I..?

WE... WELL ...

AGAWA. DEPART-MENT HEAD WANTS TO SEE YOU.

?

AGAWA ...

I UNDERSTAND YOU'RE HAVING TROUBLE DEALING WITH THE HOSTILITY BETWEEN THE HOKUTO AND NANBU DEPARTMENT STORES' BA?

KURIYAMA SHOUHEI. HEAD OF THE SALES DEPARTMENT.

4

IT IS HARDLY SURPRISING THAT THEY MIGHT DEVELOP A SENSE OF RIVALRY...

WELL, HOKUTO AND NANBU ARE STANDING RIGHT NEXT TO EACH OTHER, PLUS BOTH STORES ARE OF SIMILAR PROPORTIONS.

DAMN YOU, UMEDZU.. BASTARD SOLD ME OUT, HE DID...

NOTHING WORTH TALKING ABOUT, REA...

WELL ...

YE... YES ...

PARDON?

PERHAPS HAVING YOU SUPERVISING BOTH SITES ON YOUR OWN WAS TOO MUCH OF A WORKLOAD.

I'LL TURN OVER THE HOKUTO SITE TO UMEDZU.

...YET THEY'RE TAKING IT OFF MY HANDS?

HOKUTO'S GOT A GOOD PLACEMENT AND SATISFACTORY RESULTS...

UMEDZU, YOU ASSHOLE.

MIGHT BE A BIT HARD TO DEAL WITH THE EXTRA WORK, BUT...

...I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE, NOW, DO I?

YOU SHOULD HAVE AN EASIER TIME THIS WAY.

AGAWA, I KNOW YOU HAVE IT IN YOU!!

I CAN TELL!!

IT'S ALL RIGHT.

I'M BONED!!

UH?

YEP. CHUBBY, PALE NARUMI-CHAN.

WITH NARUMI-CHAN, YOU MEAN?

♡

AAAAH!

UH?

I WENT TO "VIVIAN", LATELY. WITH TAKEDA, AND EVERY-ONE.

SURE THING.

DAMN YOU.

WE'LL GET YOU FOR THIS.

DUH

DAMN YOU, MAN. STEALING NARUMI-CHAN LIKE THAT.

YEAH, RIGHT—

NOW THAT'S TOO BAD.

♡

AGAWA-KUN'S NOT COMING TODAY?

CHUBBY?

IT'S PART OF YOUR JOB AFTER ALL EH, AGAWA-CHAN?

GET THOSE BA CHICKS TO LISTEN TO YOU. USE THAT PRETTY BOY FACE OF YOURS TO CAJOLE THEM INTO IT IF YOU MUST.

SO-SOME THING TO SAY IN FRONT OF SOMEONE WHOSE JOB INVOLVES SELLING STUFF TO WOMEN..!!

YOU OLD-FASHIONED, SLEAZY OLD FART!

.....

HOW'S PUBLICITY SOUND..?

...YET HE'S SO MUCH MORE STYLISH YOU CAN BARELY TELL THEY'RE FROM THE SAME AGE GROUP...

WHOA... HE'S ROCKING A PATEK TODAY.

AH..

SHIMATANI-BUCHOU IS ABOUT JUST AS OLD...

...TO OVER-LAP WITH OUR DEAL-INGS AT WORK. IT'S WRONG!!

CAN'T ALLOW MY LOVE AFFAIR WITH ASOU-SAN...

NOW!!

GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF !!

8

...AND YOU GET THE PERFECT RECIPE FOR FAILURE!!

FACTOR IN THE SUPERIOR-SUBORDINATE RELATIONSHIP...

I'LL HAVE THE NANBU STORE'S SALES INCREASE, AND I'LL DO IT UNDER MY OWN POWER!!

I'LL DO IT!

NANBU

NO... NO MATTER HOW HARD IT IS...

...AND GAIN RECOG-NITION THAT WAY. THAT'S WHAT ADULTS DO

WHAT I NEED TO DO ABOVE ALL ELSE IS WORK - MY ASS OFF AT THE JOB I DO HAVE...

I'M COUNTING ON YOUR CONTINUED COOPERATION.

AND THAT'S WHY I NO LONGER SUPERVISE THE HOKUTO SITE.

IT... IT FEELS KINDA NICE... TO SEE THEM ALL SO HAPPY ABOUT IT.

UH... YEAH.

YEAAAH!

THAT MEANS WE'VE GOT YOU ALL TO OURSELVES NOW.

UH?

WE MUST BE READY TO CATCH UP TO HOKUTO, AND EVENTUALLY SURPASS THEM!

WH-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!

YEAH, THAT WAS A PAIN IN THE BUM.

NO MORE COMPARISONS WITH HOKUTO FROM NOW ON.

WE ARE INFERIOR TO HOKUTO, IS THAT WHAT YOU MEAN?!

WAI-

NO WAY!

WHAAAAT? THAT'S LIKE, NEVER GOING TO HAPPEN, IS IT?

DON'T GO CALL YOURSELVES UNMOTIVATED!

A BUNCH OF BA WITH NO MOTIVATION AND A LESS-THAN-COMPETENT BUSINESS MAN. YOU GET THE PICTURE.

MADE SOME KIND OF BLUNDER, MAYBE?

SPEAKING OF WHICH, WHY DID YOU RELINQUISH LEADERSHIP OF THE HOKUTO STORE?

I'M SURE STARTING TO FEEL UNMOT-IVATED MYSELF! SERIOUSLY !!

BLOODY HELL...

YEAH, YEAH.

SURE THING.

I AM NOT IN THE LEAST SUC-CESSFUL WITH WOMEN!!

NOT AT ALL !!

EASY, MAN. EASY.

QUIT JOK-ING!!

I WOULDN'T MIND HAVING 'EM GOING DOWN ON ME EITHER.

SO-UNDS GOOD

THEM YOUNG LADIES TEND TO LOOK DOWN ON GUYS LIKE ME ANYWAY.

BAH HOBE ?

WE'RE RUNNING AROUND IN CIRCLES HERE. WHERE'S YOUR HOME AT AGAIN?

YES, MY FOUR-EYED PRINCE. WHATEVER YOU SAY. ♡

ONLY OLDER WOMEN, WHO KNOW THE UGLY SIDE OF LIFE CAN HEAL MY PAIN.

ONLY ...

I'LL BE FINE. I CAN GO HOME ON MY OWN.

NAH.

TN: "MEGANE OUJI", OR FOUR-EYED PRINCE IS A SHOUJO MANGA (A.K.A CHEESY PIECE OF CRAP) ABOUT A BESPECT-ACLED BISHOUNEN AND THE GIRL WHO HAS A CRUSH ON HIM.

.....

.....

I'M BACK.

I CAN READ IT OKAY, BUT...

I-I CAN'T FRIGGIN' WRITE "GROUND BEETLE"!!

EVEN A SMALL CHILD COULD WRITE SUCH EASY CHARACTERS.

THA-THAT WAS THE HARDEST LEVEL ON THAT KANJI TEST!!

TADAAAH! 90% SUCCESS RATE!!

THAT GIRL'S A FREAK!!

... SMELLS LIKE ALCO-HOL...

SNIFF

I'LL GO WASH MY FACE.

HAHA ...

FOR A CHILD, THIS GIRL SURE KNOWS HOW TO PISS ME OFF.

I-I JUST HAD A DRINK WITH MY WORKMATES. THESE THINGS HAPPEN...

YEAH.

I HEARD ABOUT YOUR NEW RESPON-SIBILITY ARRANGE-MENTS.

.....

UMEDZU-KUN CAME BY OUR DEPARTMENT, CROWING ABOUT IT AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS...

.....

.....

YOU JUST GO FOR IT.

KEEP WORKING HARD, AND SURELY SOMEONE WILL NOTICE.

...ASOU-SAN JUST SAID...

THOSE WORDS

EH...

...MAKING ME A HAPPY MAN...

...HAD THEY COME FROM ONE OF MY SUPERIORS AT WORK THEY'D PROBABLY HAVE HIT HOME...

...WHICH FEELS TERRIBLE...

...IT MERELY SOUNDS LIKE SHE'S EXTENDING HER SYMPATHY...

BUT COMING FROM MY GIRL-FRIEND...

...HOW INSIGNIFICANT I AM. BUT...

I AM WELL AWARE OF...

AND YOU'VE BEEN DRINKING ALCOHOL. THAT'S LIKE, TERRIBLE, YOU KNOW?!!

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOREVER.

I HAD TO SOCIALIZE. IT'S A GROWN-UP THING.

CAN IT.

16

SO, MAYBE WE SHOULD CALL IT QUITS FOR TODAY?

MMUM...

YOU ALWAYS LOOK DRUNK WHEN WE'RE DONE ANYWAY

I'M NOT OF AGE YET! WHAT IF I GET DRUNK?!

...BUT IF YOU COULD STAY AWAY FROM ALCOHOL, I'D APPRECIATE IT.

I KNOW I'M BEING SELFISH HERE...

I'LL DO MY BEST.

AAAAAAAAH!

.....

THAT WAS MEAN.

YOU NEED TO GROW UP QUICK. START AN IDYLLIC LIFE WITH SHOE-KUN.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS..?

...WHAT ...

.....

THIS IS CREEPY NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, SO NOT IN MY ROOM, PLEASE!!

I'B HAWT.

I'B BAKING HERE.

OW!

WELL... I NEVER THOUGHT RENA WOULD BE QUITE SO BAD AT HANDLING ALCOHOL.

NOW THE SALES FOR THE DAY

.....

NAIBU

NOT BY MUCH, BUT STILL.

SLI-SLIGHTLY BETTER THAN YESTERDAY, IT IS.

SIGH

.....

PLEASURE WORKING WITH YOU

PLEA-SURE WORK-ING WITH YOU

.....

NOW THAT SOUNDS LIKE BAD NEWS.

HAD A FIGHT WITH YOUR GIRL-FRIEND?

AND WHAT IS THAT MARK AT THE CORNER OF YOUR EYE?

PUFF

_BUT YOU CAN'T EXPECT THINGS TO CHANGE SO SUD-DENLY

IT JUST WON'T HAPP-EN.

))))

ASAHA-CHAN, YOU SEEMED SO ENTHUSIASTIC IT KINDA MADE US FEEL LIKE WORKING HARDER_

SURE THING

YE-YES.

GROWING UP COMES WITH PLENTY OF RESPONS-IBILITIES. IT IS HARD.

GOTOU-SAN.

YOUNG GIRLS ARE SO IRRESP-ONSIBLE. WHAT A BUMMER.

I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS WITH YOU ABOUT SOME FUTURE PROSPECTS.

IF YOU HAVE THE TIME...

AGAWA-SAN.

UM... WELL, IT'S BEEN A PLEAS-URE.

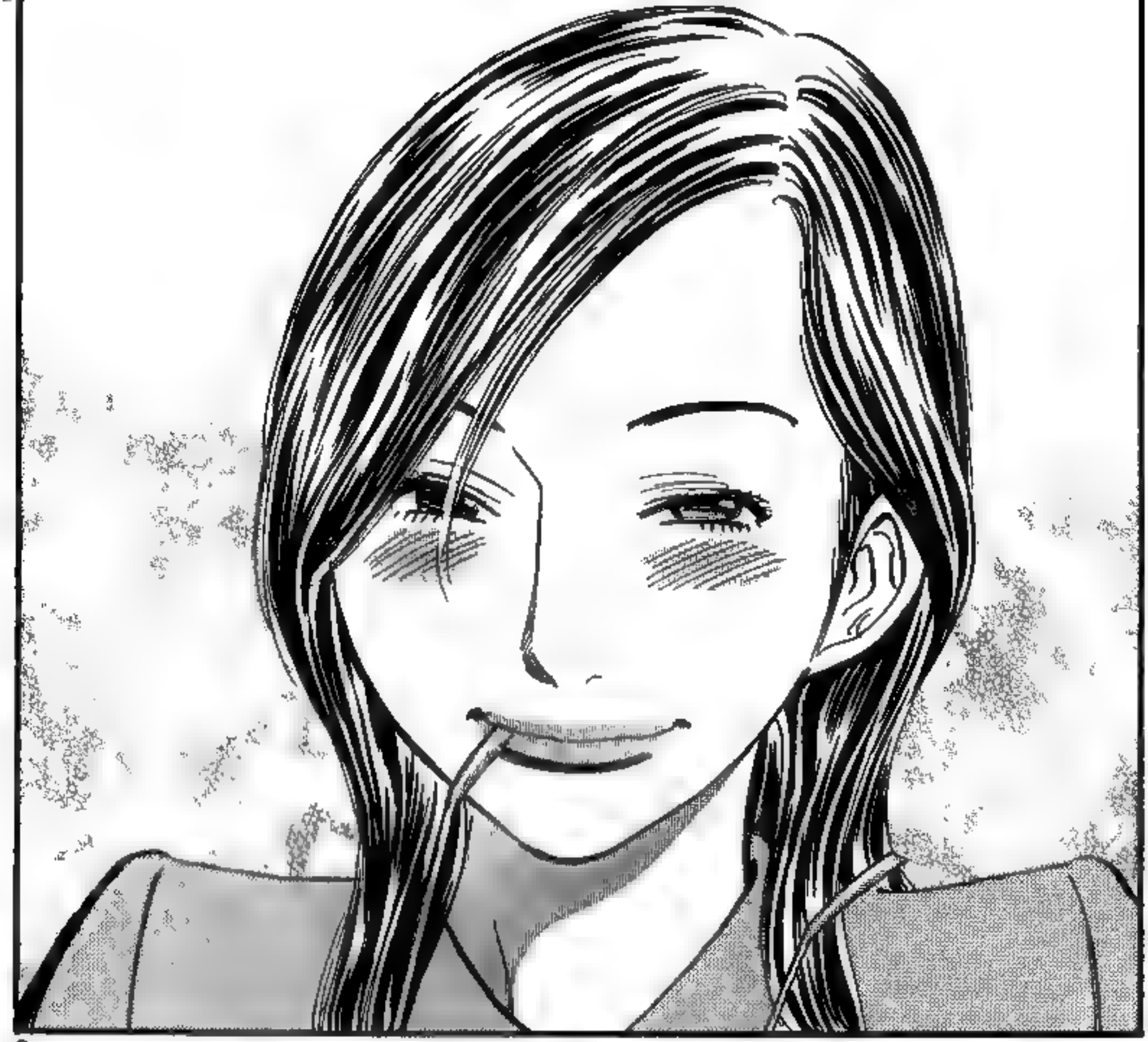
.....

...TO HAVE THE KIND OF INFORMATION THAT COULD PROFIT YOU GREATLY...

I HAPPEN ...

CHAPTER 48 -
LET US SHAKE HANDS!

第48話：握手しよう！



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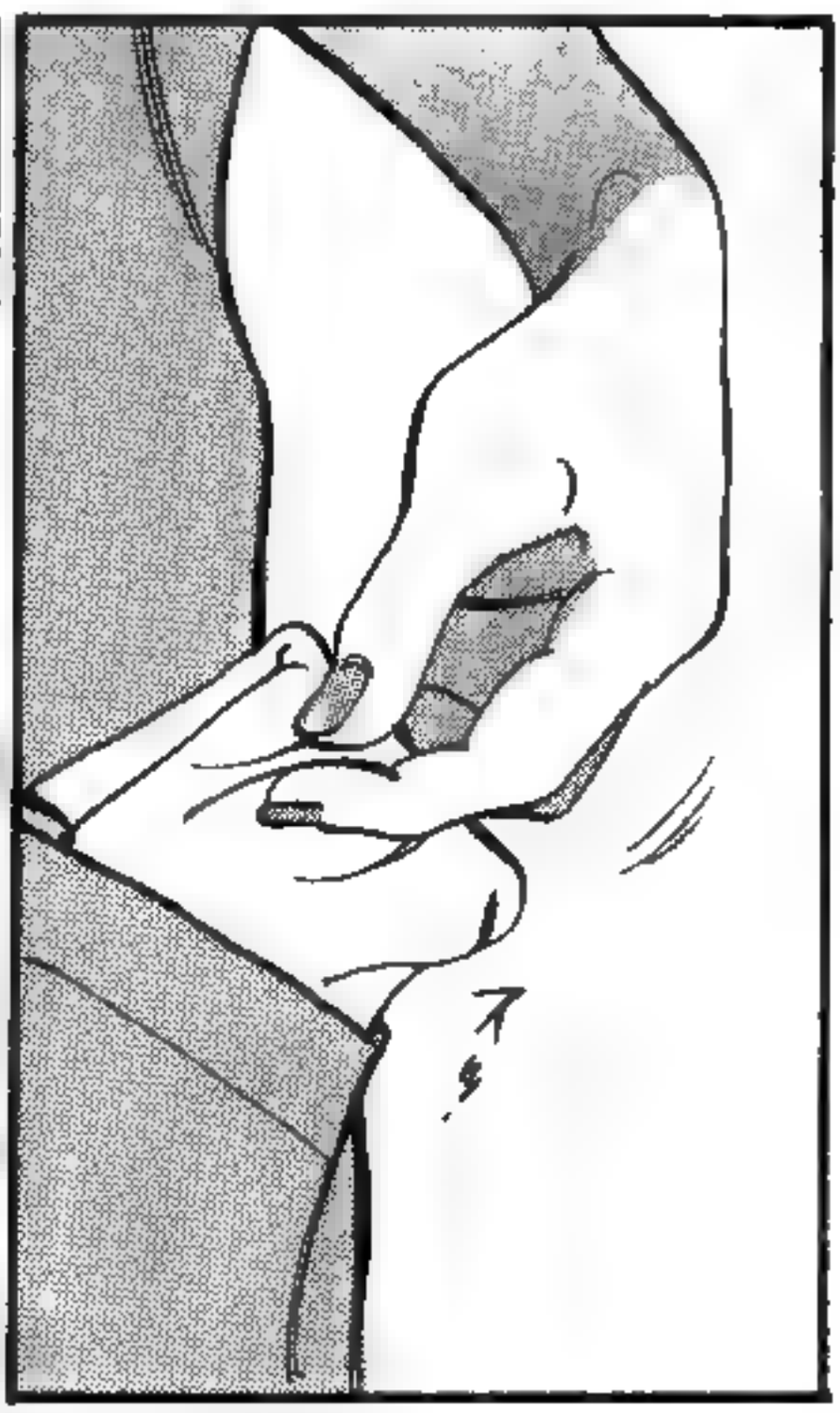


...FOR ME?!

USEFUL INFOR-MATION ...

3

OF COURSE. OUTSIDERS ARE STILL YET TO HEAR ABOUT IT.

YOU MEAN... INFORMATION FROM NANBU ..?

...WOULD GIVE *ME* INFOR-MATION ?

GOTOU SHOUKO OF THE NANBU DEPART-MENT STORE...

MOST COSMETICS SELLERS ARE LOCATED ON THE FIRST FLOOR

.....!!

!!

IT'S INVOLVES REVISING THE DISPOSITION ARRANGEMENTS ON THE FIRST FLOOR...

...MOST MANUFACTURERS WANT TO SET UP SHOPS IN THE SPOTS WITH A DECENT AMOUNT OF CIRCULATION, IN ORDER TO INCREASE THEIR SALES.

THEY PLAY A SIGNIFICANT PART IN DRAWING IN THE FEMALE CLIENTELE, IN ADDITION...

AGAWA-SAN... HOW ABOUT DINNER?

SURE!

SOUNDS GREAT. YES, OF COURSE!!

IN ANY CASE, THIS IS OUR CHANCE TO MOVE TO A BETTER SPOT!

OR MAYBE CLOSING UP SHOP?!

IF THEY ALTER THE DISPOSITION ARRANGE-MENTS, THAT MUST MEAN SOMEONE ELSE IS MOVING IN.

HE'S NOT LOW ENOUGH A GUY TO FALL FOR A GIRL LIKE HER.

SHE'S GONNA LURE HIM AWAY FROM YOU. ♡

WHAT DO YOU THINK, KAGO-CHAN?

SHE'S TALKING ABOUT HOW MUCH SHE WANTS HIM. ♡

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT, BUT GOTOU-SAN IS MAKING HER MOVE ON AGAWA-CHAN!

EH

I'LL GLADLY STOP AT ANY PLACE OF YOUR CHOOSING, THOUGH.

AN AWESOME RESTAURANT WITH GREAT FOOD.

I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHERE WE'RE HEADED.

A FEW DAYS AGO...

ALONG WITH ITS TOP NOTCH SALES RESULTS.

...MY SENPAI UMEDZU STOLE THE HOKUTO LEADERSHIP FROM ME...

BUT NOW, IF I DON'T GET NANBU'S SALES TO INCREASE...

...I'LL BE RELEGATED EVEN FURTHER DOWN THE TOTEM POLE BACK AT THE OFFICE...

HOKUTO'S GOOD RESULTS HAD HELPED OFFSET NANBU'S UNDER-PERFOR-MANCE SO FAR...

NANBU

LEAVING ME WITH THE NANBU DEPARTMENT STORE, INFERIOR TO HOKUTO IN EVERY WAY.

I CAN FORGET ABOUT IMPROVING THE SALES IN THOSE CONDITIONS.

THEY MAKE FUN OF ME, AND DON'T CARE A DAMN ABOUT WHAT I HAVE TO SAY.

BUT THE BA THERE ARE COMPLETE SLACKERS...

.....

FLICK

IT'S PART OF YOUR JOB AFTER ALL EH, AGAWA-CHAN?

GET THOSE BA CHICKS TO LISTEN TO YOU. USE THAT PRETTY BOY FACE OF YOURS TO CAJOLE THEM INTO IT IF YOU MUST.

SHE-SHE'S CHANGED HER GLASSES ALRIGHT...

AGAWA-KUN.

UH?

...DO YOU INTEND TO TREAT ME TO ANYTHING BESIDES FOOD?

ペロ♡

ABOUT DINNER ...

WHA- WHAT IS THIS PLACE ?!

WUUUUUT?

UH?

YES MA'AM!

WUT?

TAKE A RIGHT TURN HERE, CABBIE !!

I FEEL NEGLEC- TED... ♡

I'VE BEEN OUT OF A BOYFRIEND OF LATE, YOU SEE.

AH!

...NOW YOU'RE ON THE MENU♡

.....!!

AGAWA-KUN...

YES... THANK YOU.

...

UH?

AH, RIGHT ...

HELLO, SIR? WE'RE THERE.

WELL, YEAH.

BETTER LET HER KNOW I DO HAVE A GIRLFRIEND. BE AWKWARD IF SHE GETS HER HOPES UP.

DO YOU COME HERE OFTEN WITH YOUR GIRLFRIEND?

THIS IS WHAT I CALL CLASSY.

MY, THAT SOUNDS BEAUTIFUL.

WE BOTH WORK, SO WE TEND TO EAT OUT ALMOST ALL THE TIME...

SURELY A LADIES ONLY CLUB WOULD KNOW OF SOME NICE PLACES?

.....

WHEN I DO TALK ABOUT EATING OUT, IT ALWAYS INVOLVES ME AND THE OTHER GIRLS.

THEY MAKE IT CHEAP AND TASTY AROUND HERE, SO JUST GO AHEAD. FEEL FREE.

NOW, DOES THAT MEAN I DEFLECTED THE CONVERSATION AWAY FROM GIRLFRIENDS AND SUCH..?

SHE MAY BE MORE SOCIALLY ADEPT THAN I GAVE HER CREDIT FOR, BRINGING UP SUCH A SENSITIVE SUBJECT AS AGE ON HER OWN...

THEY LIKE IT CHEAP, TASTY AND ABUNDANT, AND AVAILABLE AT ANY TIME OF THE DAY.

GIRLS AROUND THAT AGE ARE MORE INTERESTED IN FOOD THAN FANCY PLACES.

IN FRONT OF A GUY? WAY TOO EMBARRASSING.

CAN'T DO THAT.

SHE'S LAUGHING LIKE A CHILD NOW...

UH?

AAAH

SHOE-KUN'S ON ANOTHER GOUKON TODAY?

NO MORE. NO LESS.

IT'S NOT A GOUKON. JUST A DRINK BETWEEN BUDDIES.

CAN'T SAY I MIND, THOUGH. I'D FEEL PRETTY LONELY DINING ON MY OWN.

IT CAME UP NATURALLY IN THE FLOW OF CONVERSATION.

IT WASN'T QUEST-IONING.

YOU QUEST-IONED HIM ABOUT IT?

...WAS A GUYS ONLY THING TOO, HE TOLD ME.

THE OTHER DRINKING PARTY...

DON'T START ACTING LIKE HIS WIFE. THERE'S NO BIGGER TURN OFF FOR A MAN.

SO YOU DID HAVE DOUBTS...

HEHEHE

HE'S "BUSY" WITH SOME WOMAN, I BET.

A BUSINE-SSMAN'S JOB IS NEVER DONE.

HE'S AT WORK.

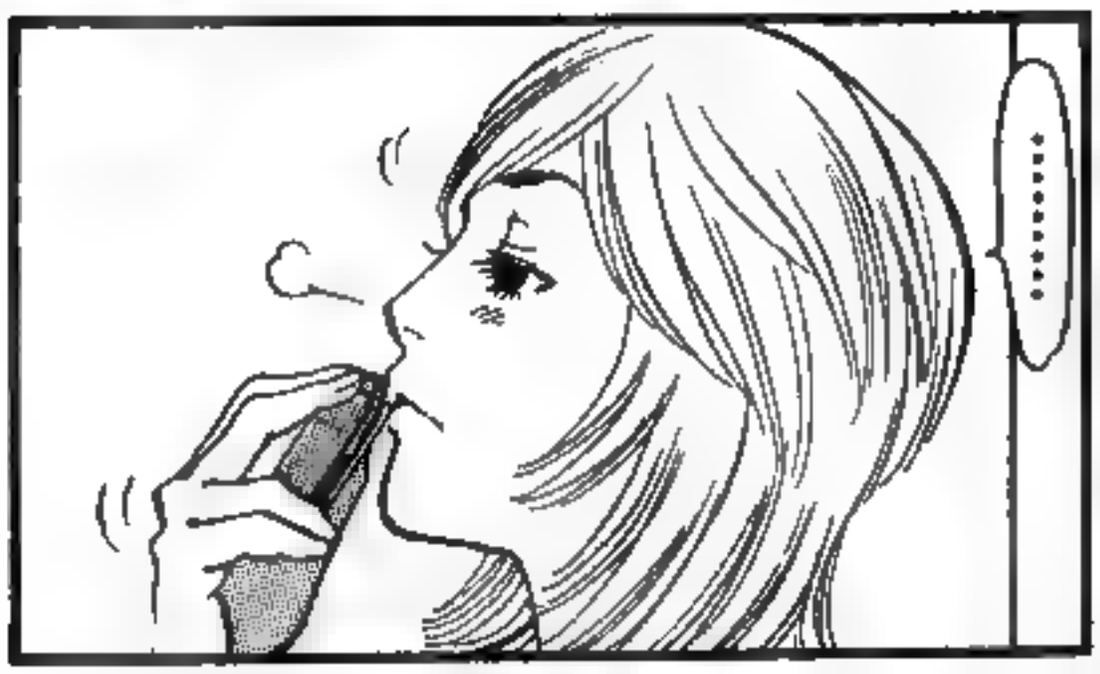
HE MUST BE DRINKING OR SOME-THING.

WHY IS AGAWA-SAN LATE TODAY AGAIN? CORP-ORATE ENTER-TAIN-MENT..?

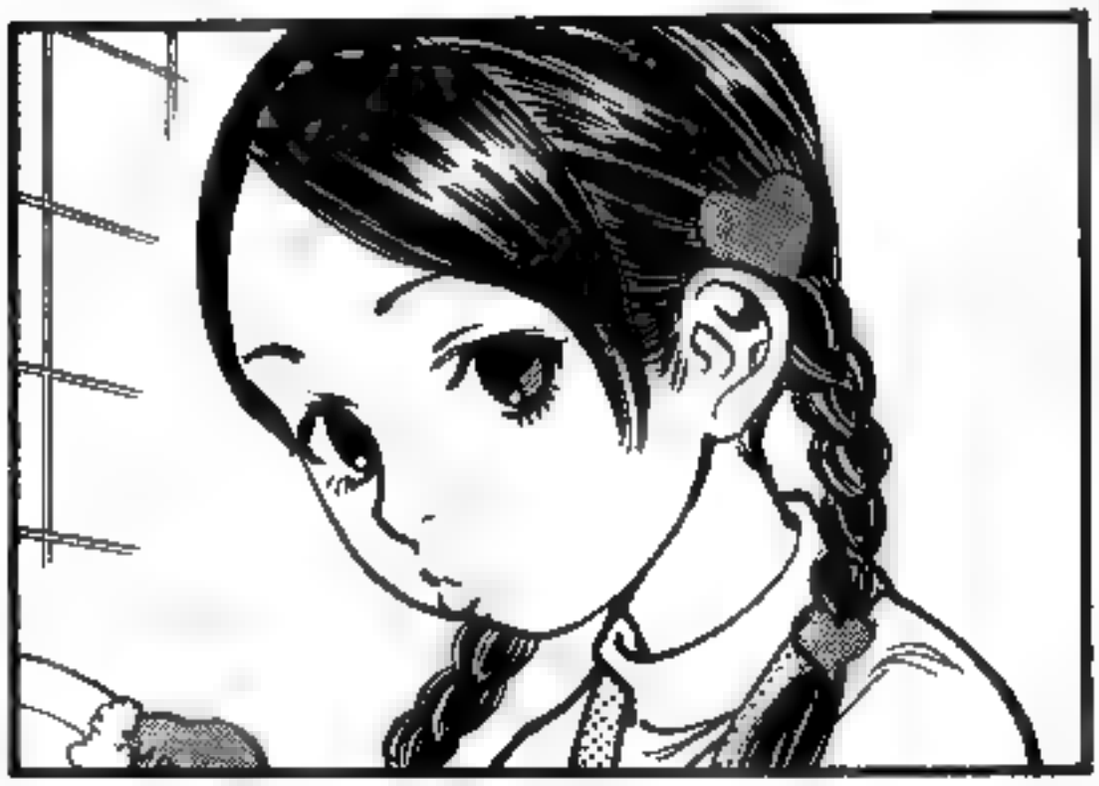
SO. WHAT OF IT?

ﾌﾌﾌ

RRRHHHH2O
I LOSE... IT'S AS CLEAR AS DAYLIGHT, I LOSE...
NO... NOTHING ...


.....

YOU STAY HERE FOR THE NIGHT.
TURNS OUT HE'LL INDEED BE LATE.
.....
OH... THANK YOU VERY MUCH...



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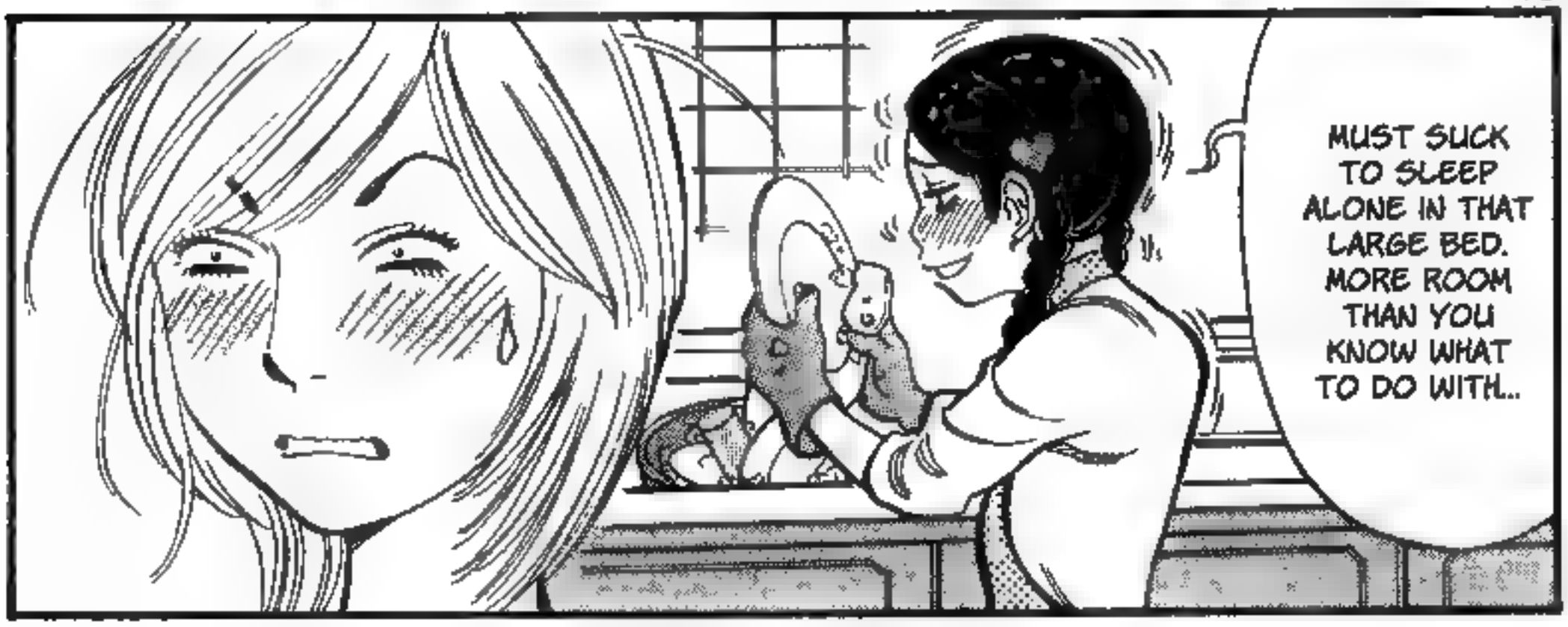

MUST SUCK TO SLEEP ALONE IN THAT LARGE BED. MORE ROOM THAN YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH..

WHUUUUU ?!

SO WHY DON'T YOU JOIN ME THERE? KEEP ME COMPANY WHILE HE'S GONE.

IT'LL BE OUR LITTLE SECRET.

M..MAN, THAT ONE WAS BRUTAL...

HA HA

THEY ARE EXP-ENS-IVE.

AND DON'T BREAK THE DISHES.

I'M JOKING OF COURSE.

IT'S SO LATE ALREADY ...

...I JUST FELT LIKE I SHOULD COMFORT YOU

TODAY ...

UH?

NO, I'M HAVING A GREAT TIME TOO.

LOOKS LIKE I'M THE ONLY ONE ENJOYING HERSELF. SORRY.

WELL ...

AND THEN --

JU-JUST GIVE ME THAT INFORMATION, THEN. I DON'T HAVE ALL NIGHT.

YOU WERE IN FAIRLY LOW SPIRITS FOR HAVING THE HOKUTO SITE TAKEN AWAY FROM YOU, RIGHT?

YES?

UH?

THANK YOU FOR PICKING US AT THE NANBU STORE.

I WANTED TO THANK YOU

IT MAY BE LITTLE MORE THAN NONSENSE... COMING FROM A GIRL WITH NO BOYFRIEND, AND WHOSE JOB IS HER ONLY LOVER...

...BUT KNOW-ING...

SHE'S BEEN GOING ON AND ON ABOUT HOW I WAS IN "LOW SPIRITS".

UM, WELL ...

IT'S NOT LIKE I ACTUALLY MADE A CHO...

...THAT YOU DECIDED TO GIVE NANBU YOUR ABSOLUTE BEST SHOT...

...MAKES ME GLAD, AGAWA-KUN.

HMM...

GIVEN THEIR YOUNG AGE THIS IS HARDLY SURPRISING.

KAGO-CHAN AND THE REST OF THE GIRLS ARE YET TO UNDERSTAND YOUR MOTIVATION...

...THOUGH THE SAME HOLDS TRUE OF MEN, I BELIEVE...

.....

ONCE YOU'RE ABOUT MY AGE, WORK BECOMES AN IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR LIFE...

YE-YES?!

AGAWA-KUN!!

...?

HOLD OUT YOUR ARM!

SHAKE HANDS. AS IN, A HAND-SHAKE...

COME AGAIN?

LET US SHAKE HANDS.

...AM YOUR FRIEND !!

I...

GO

...CRASH-ING THROUGH THE ROOF!!

...TOGETHER WE SHALL PUT THE OTHER GIRLS BACK ON THE RIGHT TRACK, AND SEND NANBU'S SALES...

I SHOULD BE ASHAMED ...

TO THINK I'VE ONLY BEEN THINKING ABOUT MY OWN ADVANCE-MENT...

...BUT INTER-PERSONAL RELATIONS ARE WHAT DO MAKE SOCIETY WHAT IT IS.

...WHEN YOU'RE PART OF SOCIETY...

HAVING A JOB IS ONLY NATURAL ...

...KNOW-ING THIS WOULD MAKE ME SO HAPPY.

NEVER THOUGHT ...

KEEP WORKING HARD, AND SURELY SOMEONE WILL NOTICE.

...AND VOWED TO STRUGGLE ALONGSIDE ME!!

...SOMEONE JUST DECLARED THEMSELF MY FRIEND!!

AND DOWN WITH HOKUTO!!

LET'S GIVE IT OUR BEST SHOT, GOTOU-SAN!!

ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT! I'M COMING!!

LET'S GO, AGAWA CHAN!

AWWWRITE! NEXT STOP: THE KARAOKE. KARAOKE IT IS!!

B1

味

ええええ…

I WANNA CRY TO THIS WHILE SINGING WITH ALL MY HEART!

THIS IS THE BITTER SONG OF A GIRL WHO'S JUST BEEN DUMPED!!

LET'S START THIS WITH A TUNE OF MINE!!

OKAY!

20

ジャラン

チャン チャン チャラ チャラ

PFA HAH!

I CAN'T TAKE IT!

...IS WHAT I THOUGHT IT MEANT! TURNS OUT IT WAS ABOUT ## CLUB!!

TEXT
LET'S GOOOOO! CHESTNUT-PICKIIIIING!

TEXT: HIIIIIGH ABOOOOVE~!

TEXT: JUMPIIIIIIIG~!

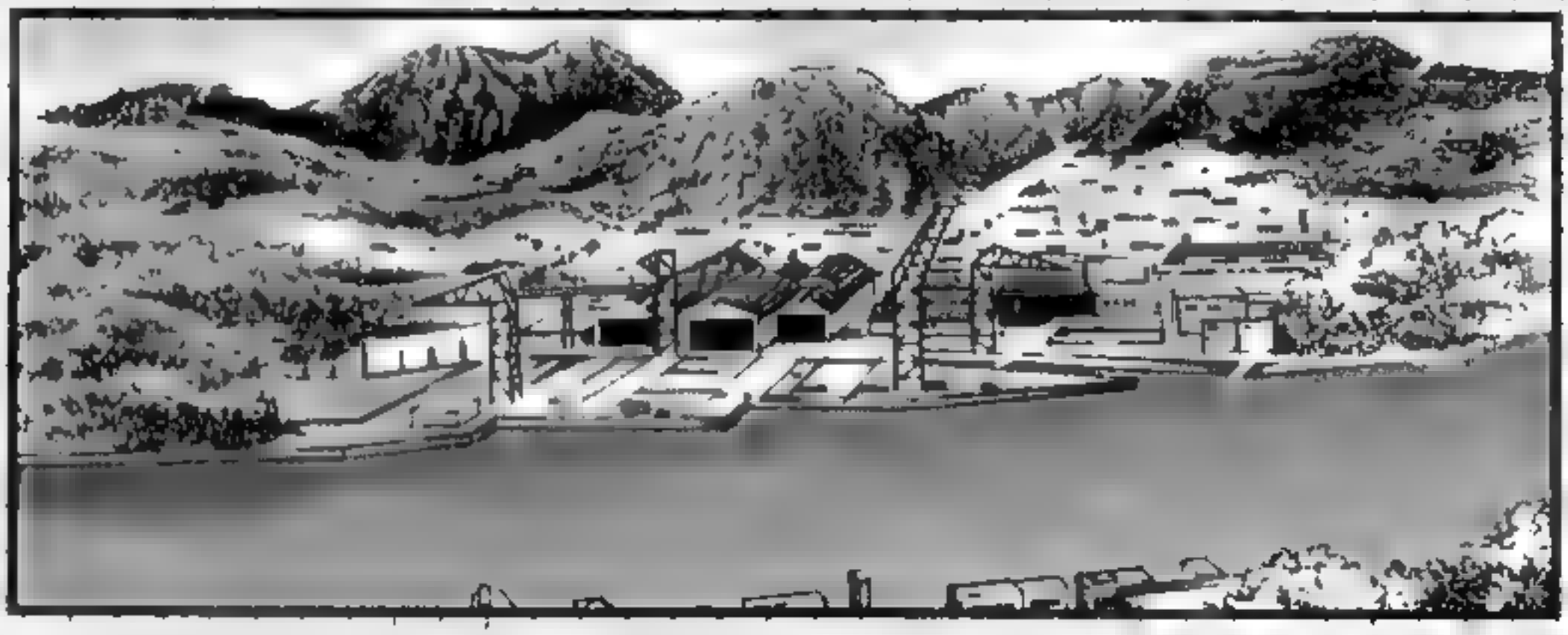
SAKURANBO SYNDROME (CUPID'S PRANK II) (5) - THE END

クピドの裏側。

うらがわ

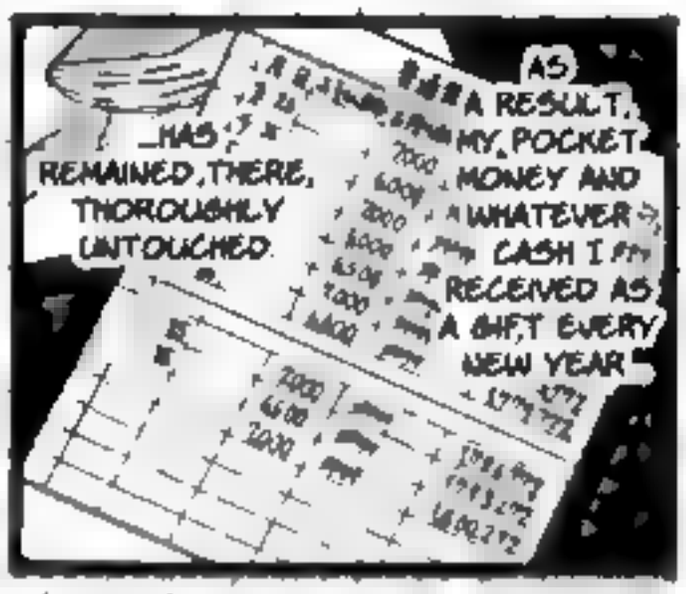
Making of "Cupid II".

AN INSIDER'S VIEW OF THE SERIES' PRODUCTION, DELIVERED BY THE AUTHOR. AND A BIT OF A MIXED BAG. PLEASE COME ALONG.



[THE AMAMI SISTER'S HOMETOWN] CHAPTER 39

THIS PICTURE COMES FROM SOME TOWN IN THE HIROSHIMA PREFECTURE
MOVIES HAVE MADE THE PLACE PRETTY FAMOUS —
THE AUTHOR ATTENDED PRIMARY SCHOOL THERE FOR SEVERAL YEARS. HE WAS FOND OF DRAWING SINCE CHILDHOOD, WHICH LEFT HIM WITH A BAD HABIT OF NEVER LEAVING HOME.
UNSURPRISINGLY THOUGH, LIVING THERE MEANT THAT HIS HOUSE WAS RIGHT NEXT TO THE SEA, SO HE WOULD GO FISHING VERY OFTEN AS A DISTRACTION. BY THE WAY, THE EDITOR WAS ASKED TO TAKE A LOOK AT THE HIROSHIMA DIALECT, SINCE HE COMES FROM THAT REGION. ALL THE AUTHOR REMEMBERS IS "WHAT LITTLE A BOY IN PRIMARY SCHOOL WOULD KNOW", WHICH MEANT IT HADN'T SEEN MUCH USE. [TN: IT DOESN'T TRANSLATE WELL, BUT THE CHARACTERS DO USE DIALECT HERE AND THERE, IF INFREQUENTLY.]


AS A RESULT, MY POCKET MONEY AND WHATEVER CASH I RECEIVED AS A GIFT EVERY NEW YEAR
_HAS REMAINED THERE, THOROUGHLY UNTOUCHED

[RENA'S BANK BOOK] CHAPTER 40

THAT BOOK RAISED AN ISSUE ABOUT "HOW IMPROBABLY LARGE THE FIGURES ON IT WERE". IT'S ALREADY ANSWERED ELSEWHERE, BUT SHE'S BEEN ACCUMULATING WHATEVER POCKET MONEY, NEW YEAR'S GIFTS FROM RELATIVES AND THE LIKE, PLUS A LIFETIME GIFT (DONATIO INTER VIVOS) FROM HER GRANDFATHER, WHO HAPPENS TO RUN A COMPANY.
NOW THAT SOUNDS STRANGELY REALISTIC...(LOL).
THE OTHER BOOK IN THE BACKGROUND CONTAINS THE MONEY HER PARENTS PUT ASIDE FOR HER TO ATTEND COLLEGE AND THAT SHE CAN'T TOUCH.

[ASOU-SAN'S GLOVES] CHAPTER 42

IT'S GETTING COLD,
SO ASOU SAN APPLIES MOISTURIZING CREAM TO HER HANDS AND PUT ON GLOVES TO SLEEP, IN ORDER TO KEEP HER FINGER PRETTY

...BUT I'LL BE GOING FOR THE SAME FASHIONABLE LOOK AS MIKI-CHAN.
IT'S A BIT OF A PITY -
TO THINK I GREW THAT JET BLACK HAIR OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR A GIRL IN A NOVEL I LOVED...

[JET-BLACK HAIR] CHAPTER 42

THE CHARACTER RENA LOVES IN ANNE OF GREEN GABLES IS NOT THE MAIN CHARACTER HERSELF, BUT HER BOSOM FRIEND DIANA.

[I CAN'T FRIGGIN' WRITE "GROUND BEETLE"!!] CHAPTER 47

THE AUTHOR HIMSELF TENDS TO FORGET ABOUT IT AS THE SERIES GOES ON, BUT RENA DOES HAVE A KNACK FOR STUDYING.
BY THE WAY, HE CAN'T EVEN READ THAT WORD (LOL).
THOSE GLASSES AND MUSTACHE RENA IS WEARING ARE A TOY ASOU-SAN OFFERED HER AS A PRANK.

[ROCKING A PATEK] CHAPTER 47

PATEK PHILIPPE
A WORLD CLASS BRAND OF LUXURY WATCHES.
TRUTH BE TOLD, IT IS WAY TOO EXPENSIVE FOR YOUNG AGAWA-KUN TO AFFORD. STILL, HOW IMMATURE OF HIM TO JUDGE A SUPERIOR BY THE VALUE OF HIS WATCH (LOL).

[RENA'S APRONS] CHAPTER 48

THE ONE IN THE RIGHT PANEL BELONGS TO ASOU-SAN (AND IT HASN'T SEEN MUCH USE).
IT'S TOO LARGE FOR RENA, SO SHE TIES THE STRAP INTO A KNOT TO SHORTEN IT.
IN THE LEFT PANEL, SHE'S WEARING A CHILD'S APRON ASOU-SAN OFFERED HER LATER.
THE CAT WITH THE NERVOUS GRIN THAT ILLUSTRATES IT PROMPTED RENA TO SUSPECT THAT ASOU-SAN MIGHT "YET AGAIN BE MAKING FUN OF HER", BUT SOMEHOW THE LATTER SEEMED TO GENUINELY THINK THAT "IT LOOKED PRETTY".

[AGAWA-KUN'S WATCH 2] CHAPTER 48

A WATCH OUT OF AGAWA KUN'S COLLECTION.
OMEGA SPEEDMASTER PROFESSIONAL.
THIS IS THE FIRST WATCH AGAWA-KUN EVER BOUGHT, AS IT IS A COMMON STARTING POINT FOR A BEGINNER.
THIS WATCH WILL SHOW UP AGAIN IN VOLUME 6.

Making of "Cupid". To be continued.

加護「彼女がぜ～ったいしてくれない
ようなスゴいこと、してあげよっか♡」

阿川「……」

さくらんぼクピドの悪戯Ⅱ
シンドローム

第6巻2008年冬2月発売予定!!

さくらんぼシンドローム クピドの悪戯(いたずら) II 5

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CERBERUS

GANTZ WAITING ROOM

ENXAME

OFFTOPIA

[gantz_waitingroom]

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editing by morten